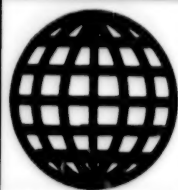


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JPRS Report

Near East & South Asia

INDIA

Near East & South Asia INDIA

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5 November 1993

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International Affairs

Commentator Examines U.S. Foreign Policy

93AS1057D Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
20 Jul 93 p 8

[Article by Bharat Bhushan, Washington correspondent: "Clinton's New Agenda: India at Receiving End of US Foreign Policy Activism"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] The cancellation of the Russian rocket engine deal seems to have led to an incomprehension about where Indo-US relations are going under the Clinton administration.

After all, the intense US pressure on India on the nuclear issue and of late, the rocket engine deal, does not square with its inaction on reports of transfer of Chinese M-11 missile technology to Pakistan. US criticism of India's human rights record never seems to cease and its policy towards Kashmir has become much more unequivocal with its declared preference for the "voice of the people of Kashmir" to be taken into account in any settlement of the issue. Ill-informed US Congressmen go on making unchallenged claims about Punjab being occupied by the Indian army and Kashmir being another Bosnia. Barely a month ago, the entire House of Representatives—Democrats and Republicans alike—united in chastising India for its human rights record in Kashmir and Punjab.

In the area of trade, a special inter-agency committee continues to examine India's lack of compliance with US trade laws. Such in fact has been the persistence and vehemence of US criticism of India's trade practices that Indian officialdom is now willing to capitulate on patents and intellectual property rights issues. Only the other day, the US Executive Director in the World Bank abstained in the vote for a \$400 million loan to India's power sector, signalling the displeasure of his government on environmental grounds.

Is it any surprise then that Indians are wondering what on earth is going on? This incomprehension has become particularly acute after the cancellation of the rocket engine deal which came barely a day after the US decided not to designate Pakistan a state-sponsor of terrorism. To understand US policy in South Asia, we Indians need to recognise that there is a wide discrepancy between how we view ourselves and our neighbours and the rest of the world's perception of the regional situation. Secondly, we must understand that the democratic agenda for post-cold war US foreign policy has become one of radical social interventionism.

While India and Pakistan may see US policy towards them as a zero-sum game, it is not how the US needs to view its policy towards South Asia. And even if it provides perverse pleasure of persecution by the US to those steeped in cold war thinking, it is important not to see the terrorism issue and the rocket engine deal in tandem if one wants to understand the direction of Indo-US relations.

Just because the Soviet Union has collapsed and the Afghan Mujahideen have been used cynically and discarded by the Americans, it does not follow that Pakistan is no longer important in US foreign policy considerations.

The religious and political stature of Pakistan in the Islamic world and the new relationship it has been attempting to forge with the Central Asian republics makes it a useful US ally—perhaps not as useful as in the heyday of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan but useful nonetheless. And just as Indo-US relations are undergoing change, so are US-Pak relations being redefined.

It was too much to hope that having been a Soviet ally all along, after the collapse of the Soviet Union the US will leap to embrace India. This unrealistic hope had been laid to rest during the Bush regime itself. Its place, however, was taken by another equally unrealistic expectation that coming of the Democrats to power would mean that the world's largest democracy, that is India, would find its rightful place in international politics.

The fact of the matter is that American supremacy in the international arena combined with the ascendancy of the Democrats to power in the US has created an unusually hostile context for Indo-US relations. The former has meant that US utterances on international relations are seen as the only legitimate discourse on the subject. The rise of the Democrats to power, on the other hand, has resulted in the agenda of non-proliferation, human rights and environmental protection being used as a stick to beat with the regimes that are considered 'undemocratic' and 'irresponsible.'

The Americans have been saying for some time now that in dealing with South Asia they are confronted in one place, with all the key post-cold war foreign policy concerns of the Clinton Administration—regional instability, non-proliferation, promoting democracy and human rights, countering terrorism and narcotics smuggling and encouraging economic reform.

Who can deny that there is regional instability in South Asia and not only because of Indo-Pak tensions but because of a succession of weak governments assuming office in the two countries? There is a genuine fear of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction given the nuclear, ballistic missile and chemical and biological warfare programmes of India and Pakistan.

Democratic institutions are at best weak in the region and through a regression in societal vision are being weakened further. Prime Ministers are either hanged, shot or bombed when they are not being accused of being in league with narcotic smugglers, arms dealers or stock market swindlers. There is scant respect for human rights. And as far as the Americans are concerned, the economies in the region are not as open as they would like them to be. In India, despite economic liberalisation, their concerns about trade and intellectual property rights are not being addressed effectively and in Pakistan Benazir Bhutto is talking of renationalisation of some of the public enterprises privatised by Nawaz Sharif.

In this context, whether it is the rocket engine deal with Russia, or the issue of human rights in Kashmir or Punjab, environmental concerns about Narmada or Singrauli, or trade-related intellectual property rights issues, it should be clear that India and the US have remarkably divergent

views. If Indo-US relations have changed since the coming of President Bill Clinton into power, they have indeed changed for the worse.

And if Bill Clinton's foreign policy pronouncements are anything to go by, Indo-US relations are unlikely to see any significant improvement. Consider what Clinton told the American Society of Newspaper Editors on April 1, at Annapolis. He said: "During the cold war, our foreign policies largely focussed on relations among nations. Our strategy sought a balance of power to keep the peace. *Today, our policies must also focus on relations within nations; on a nation's form of government, on its economic structure, on its ethnic tolerance. These are of concern to us, for they shape how these nations treat their neighbours as well as their own people, and whether they are reliable when they give their word.*" (Emphasis added)

The defining context of the new US foreign policy agenda therefore is one of interference in what have traditionally been considered internal and sovereign matters of a nation. That this kind of an activist agenda, which in some ways is the reflection in a liberal mirror of the international concerns that the communists set themselves, is likely to bog down US foreign policy in hitherto unknown and dangerous terrains. But that can be little satisfaction to India because it too would be at the receiving end of that foreign policy activism.

Foreign Policy Said Subservient to U.S. Interests

93AS1093B Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
28 Jul 93 p 8

[Article by Kuldip Nayar: "Faults in India's Foreign Policy"]

[Text] Assessing India's foreign policy is like the 10 fabled blind men inspecting an elephant. Each one comes to a conclusion about the creature. The moral is that it is difficult to determine whether truth is absolute or lies in the eye of the beholder. Our External Affairs Ministry oscillates between the two.

But Parliamentary Consultative Committee members, who met in New Delhi, did not see even partial truth in the claims of the Foreign Office. Justifiably, they were upset. They had been fed for days on assurances that (a) the USA would include Pakistan on the list of terrorist countries, and, (b) that Russia, despite the USA's pressure, was determined to supply cryogenic engines for our space programme.

The External Affairs Minister, Mr Dinesh Singh's explanation was that members were not seeing the whole truth, which was that the USA wanted to come close to India. The Minister also said that members picked up instances that looked hostile but in essence they were not. The overall picture of Indo-U.S. relations was more optimistic than before.

He also admitted that the USA was motivated by self-interest—as if other nations are not. Convincing another country that its self-interest will not be jeopardized if it follows certain norms and values is what foreign policy is all about. That New Delhi has not been able to do so is its failure.

Pakistan's complicity in Punjab and Kashmir is beyond doubt. But the CIA Director, Mr Gates, then a special envoy, conveyed to New Delhi in 1990 that Pakistan had closed 37 camps which trained militants from Punjab. More recently, Mr John Malott, then interim head of the South Asia Bureau, submitted a similar report to the Secretary of State, Mr Warren Christopher, regarding training of Kashmiris. Pakistan is a consequence, not a cause. Our wrong policies have given rise to terrorism.

This has been confirmed by the situation in Punjab. Now that there is relative calm, not even rabid anti-Pakistanis talk about Islamabad's intervention. The cause has disappeared. In the same manner, the key to the Kashmir situation is to win over its people. After all, the infiltration into the valley in 1965 was reported by the Kashmiris themselves. Why the scene has changed is a question which New Delhi should ask itself.

U.S. policy in the subcontinent is to remain equidistant from India as well as Pakistan. It does not want to take sides. It has straightened its tilt towards Islamabad. We want the tilt in our favour. The entire thinking is wrong. On rocket technology, Washington, believe it or not, feels that India's missiles can one day pose a threat to the USA. Not long ago, a U.S. military expert explained the point. Washington would not like India to be either scientifically or militarily too strong.

Disputed Territory

The worst pressure is still to come. Washington has changed its policy on Kashmir, from finding a solution within the limits of the Simla Agreement to declaring that Kashmir is a disputed territory and that the solution has to be found with the help of all the three parties—India, Pakistan and the Kashmiris (the Kashmiris have been mentioned for the first time). India's position on the non-proliferation treaty was beginning to be appreciated by the Bush Administration, that is, China should also be a party to any arrangement in South Asia. The Clinton Administration does not seem to equate China with India.

New Delhi is to blame for the humiliation it receives at American hands. The moment we realized that Mr Mikhail Gorbachev could neither save Communism nor the Soviet Union, we made a beeline for Washington. True, the USA needed us at one time but that was before the end of the Cold War. We were then a sounding board or a communication channel with Moscow that Washington often used. Now when Russia itself is knocking at America's door, the necessity for a messenger has gone. We did not realize it for a long time. Even if we did, we were over-anxious to mend fences with the USA.

The economic mess in which we were made our dependence pathetic. So much so that we allowed the opening of the IMF's office in New Delhi, something which no other country has done so far. American academics and others were invited under one pretext or another and given five-star hospitality to interact with their Indian counterparts of little consequence.

Record at U.N.

At the same time, India went out of its way to placate U.S. policymakers. Our record at the U.N. in the past two years is that we have hardly voted against the USA. On Bosnia, we abstained when the Organization of Islamic Conference [OIC] sought the Security Council's urgent attention in the Vienna human rights conference to end the genocide of Muslims. The USA was against the resolution and so we could not support it. Had Nehru been alive, he would have taken the initiative and activated the non-alignment movement to arouse world conscience. The real truth is that India has had no foreign policy after Nehru.

Officials and Ministers take the first plane to Islamic countries when the OIC discusses Kashmir. There is the same kind of movement if there is a resolution before the U.S. Congress or the European Economic Community to cut aid to India.

Non-alignment was both a necessity and an ideal; a necessity because India wanted a respite from the rivalries of the Western And Eastern blocs to build itself; an ideal because it was the approach of tolerance, of feeling that both sides had some share of the truth. Nehru was able to create and expand the grey area in a world where there were no shades, only black and white.

But he also committed the mistake of making non-alignment an umbrella under which dictatorial rulers could assembly by parroting independence without giving a thought to its meaning. There was yet another mistake in the tilt of the non-alignment movement towards Moscow. India was caught on the wrong foot many times—in Hungary where there was striving for freedom from foreign control or in Afghanistan where the mighty Soviet empire wanted to devour a small independent State.

After the Cold War, both non-alignment and India were bound to look irrelevant. Had we maintained a distance from the USA, we would have conveyed that we were not living in twilight because of the Soviet Union's eclipse. It would have meant a bit of sacrifice and hardship. But we might have emerged as a self-respecting nation.

How could it be when the dominant opinion in the Government is that good relations with the USA are the sine qua non of our foreign policy. Despite Washington's rebuffs, there are assiduous efforts to arrange a summit between the Indian Prime Minister and the U.S. President. It is difficult to see what purpose it would serve. The Democrats have turned out to be, as usual, more opposed to India than the republicans. President Clinton's wiskids are primarily interested in the huge Indian market. They are willing to accommodate New Delhi's sensitivities to the extent America's interests do not suffer. The bottom-line is that India should not attain a position where it begins to dictate terms in the region.

Capitol Hill Said Home of 'Nonproliferation Fundamentalists'

93AS1071D New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English 31 Jul 93 p 51

[Article by Shekhar Gupta: "Tolerating Reality"]

[Text] They are called the non-proliferation fundamentalists. The highly motivated campaigners for universal acceptance of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty (NPT) on Capitol Hill and the Washington-based think-tanks who see South Asia as a likely ground zero for the future. Now the winds of realism among this community are bringing about a surprisingly different fall-out.

Leonard Spector, the doughty non-proliferationist at the Carnegie Endowment whom Indian commentator Inder Malhotra calls the grand mufti of the non-proliferationist fundamentalists, is a changed man. "We are dealing with a *fait accompli* (in South Asia)," he says and adds resignedly, "I will not embrace the reality but tolerate it."

He, like others of his ilk, admits that though they have been irritating and frustrating at times for the Americans, the Indian debaters in the nuclear arena have posted a victory of sorts. "They have won the battle a bit, in the sense that the US and the world have begun to think of the South Asian zone as a nuclearized zone," Spector says. The Indian argument so far has been that talking of making India and Pakistan sign the NPT as non-nuclear powers is impractical at a time when each side suspects the other of having nuclear weapons.

Spector, as well as his non-proliferationist colleague Geoffrey Kemp at Carnegie, are willing to settle for practical solutions, like capping the nuclear programs, stopping the spread of missiles and other delivery systems, and formulating a reliable system of confidence-building measures and controls. Yet another Washington-based think-tank, the Henry L. Stimson Centre, devoted entirely to the pursuit of confidence-building measures (CBMS), has been working feverishly to bring pressure on India as well as Pakistan. "Our effort is to persuade the two governments to establish a firm regime of CBMS. Without that, an accidental war is a real possibility in the subcontinent," says Michael Krepon who heads the centre.

In a way, the think-tanks also reflect the changed mood in the US administration and vice versa. There is a "practical" understanding of the nuclear realities in South Asia and it is reflected in the rounds of official level talks on the nuclear question between India and the US. The next round of talks, in fact, is scheduled later in July in Washington.

US officials identify areas of likely discord in the near future. "If the Indians were to deploy Prithvi, test Agni again and the Chinese were to continue with missile sale to the Pakistanis, the nuclear race will go a step further, requiring our intervention," says a senior official.

The other irritant for which both US and Indian policymakers are bracing themselves is the Tarapur question which will come to the forefront again as the agreement for the supply of nuclear fuel comes up in October this year. "Everything could come unstuck on Tarapur as it is a black or white situation," says Spector. "Either you have inspections or you don't." The issue will be further complicated when the French, before supplying fuel, will insist that all the nuclear establishments of the country observe international safeguards. It is in fact the contentious potential of

this question that will have a bearing on the final timing of Prime Minister Narasimha Rao's visit to the US planned for this winter.

The other continuing problem is what is seen as India dragging its feet at the level of official dialogue. While the initial sessions proceeded well, the process is now stalled. The US side, at the first round in Delhi, presented an approach paper to which India had to respond. South Block set up a hush-hush committee of "eminent persons" to draft a response paper. It included, besides top officials of the defense, external affairs and atomic energy ministries and cabinet secretariat, the present and former chiefs of the Atomic Energy Commission, and even analyst K. Subrahmanyam. But its approach paper has been gathering dust in the Prime Minister's Office waiting for him to find time to examine it. With the non-proliferation fundamentalists already miffed at having lost the first round of the nuclear debate, even if on points, this is a major irritant.

Papers Report Reaction to U.S. Attack on Iraq

Foreign Office Statement

93AS1106A Madras *THE HINDU* in English
29 Jun 93 p 9

[Article by K.K. Katyal: "India's Reaction to U.S. Attack Muted"]

[Text] New Delhi, June 28. In a noticeably muted comment on the U.S. Missile attack on Iraq, India today expressed the hope that all disputes would be settled peacefully without resort to force. The farthest that New Delhi went was to express concern over the violation of national sovereignty and to draw attention to its negative impact on the peace process in West Asia.

Equally significant was the preamble, somewhat loosely-worded, of the brief statement on the subject, read out by the Foreign Office spokesman, saying that India, itself a victim of State-sponsored terrorism from across the western border, supported action against such an activity.

India, obviously, sought to balance two considerations, mutually conflicting. On the one hand, it did not want to be seen as avoiding comment on the use of force by the U.S. against another country; on the other, it could not let go an opportunity for denouncing state-sponsored terrorism, especially when it had been wanting the U.S. to proceed against Pakistan because of the latter's support to terrorist violence in Kashmir valley and Punjab.

In the process, it combined a low-key reference to the missile attack with support to action against terrorism. New Delhi, thus, had not gone as far as, say France, from among the Western nations and Malaysia in Asia.

Going by reports from Washington, the U.S. defended its action as self-defence (against a state-backed terrorist plot) and as such falling under Art. 51 of the U.N. Charter. Since terrorism or aggression was directed against the U.S. it, so went the argument, could act on its own without involving the U.N. Security Council.

Now that India backed the action against terrorism, the question arose whether the U.S. would show due consideration to New Delhi's concerns on this count. The U.S. had acted, to quote its President, Mr. Bill Clinton's statement, on the basis of a "car-bombing plot" to assassinate the former President, Mr. George Bush, as discovered by investigating agencies after interrogating the 16 suspects including two Iraqi nationals arrested by the Kuwaiti authorities. New Delhi should be interested in knowing whether the U.S. would now revise its opinion about the evidence, adduced by India, on Pakistan's complicity in various acts of violence, not excluding the Bombay blasts. In the past, Washington rejected the evidence in regard to blasts as lacking substance.

The Left parties would certainly pounce on the Indian Government, describing its stand as a case of surrender to the U.S. pressure. But whether the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] would take a tolerant view, because of the anti-terrorism slant given by the Government was to be seen.

The following is the text of the spokesman's statement on the attack: "The Government of India is against State-sponsored terrorism. We are ourselves victims of State-sponsored terrorism from across the border in the west. We support action against State-sponsored terrorism.

On the other hand, we are concerned about the violation of national sovereignty. Such phenomena can affect peace and stability in the West Asian region where assiduous efforts are on to further the peace process.

"We have sympathy for the people of Iraq and regret the civilian population suffered. We hope all disputes will be settled peacefully without resort to force."

UNI reports:

Iraq sought the firm support of India and other non-aligned countries in condemning the missile attack on Baghdad. "We hope that they (India and other countries) stand by international law in condemning such aggressions against innocent people." Mr. Husham A. Ibrahim, Iraqi Charge de Affaires, told newsmen here.

Middle East Correspondent's Report

93AS1106B Madras *THE HINDU* in English
28 Jun 93 p 1

Article by F.J. Khargamvala: "Clinton Attempt To Shore Up Image"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] Manama (Bahrain), June 27. It was present-day America's active political crusader, Mr. H. Ross Perot, who said last month: "When things are going wrong we like to start little wars to distract attention." The attack on Baghdad on early morning of Sunday by 23 Tomahawk cruise missiles is seen primarily as an attempt by a beleaguered Clinton administration to shore up its domestic image, especially on Bosnia, of being a wimped Government.

The declared rationale behind the attack on Iraqi Intelligence Service headquarters is that it was the chief instrument behind Mr. Saddam Husayn's alleged attempt at assassinating former U.S. President, Mr. George Bush, on his visit to Kuwait last April. Yet, the first thing wrong

about the strike on the Baghdad area of Al Mansoor is that it took place before a Kuwaiti trial of men alleged to have conspired to kill Mr. Bush was concluded. Next, to explain its case, the U.S. asked for an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council, expected to take place today. It is clear that by undertaking the strike before making public whatever evidence has been assembled, Mr. Bill Clinton has pre-empted any advice of restraint, lest it be seen as the country which had flouted international law, which it has in any case.

Eleven Iraqis and three Kuwaitis are on trial, charged with a conspiracy to kill Mr. Bush with a car bomb. The trial opened on June 5 but was recessed after a day and it resumed only on Saturday, less than a day before the Tomahawk Land Attack Missiles (TLAMs) went in action. Two Iraqis, both with forged Iraqi supplied UAE passports, had confessed to the charges and blamed sponsorship on Baghdad. One later retracted his confession.

It was at 1-25 on Sunday morning in Baghdad when two American vessels stationed in the Gulf and the Red Sea were said to have launched 23 TLAMs at parts of the Iraq Intelligence Service headquarters in the heavily populated area of Al Mansoor, about 7 km south of downtown Baghdad. The U.S. President, citing the attempt on the life of his predecessor, said, "We cannot and have not let such action pass" and in a language reminiscent of Mr. Bush warned "don't tread on us."

This is the first time in many U.S. versus Iraq encounters that Washington has not cited violation of the United Nations resolutions by Iraq as a rationale, though Resolution 687, the formal Gulf war ceasefire resolution, does prohibit Baghdad from undertaking terrorist acts. Unlike Mr. Bush, the Clinton administration has clearly implied this was a U.S.-Iraq matter. That is perhaps why, apart from the need to minimise own casualties, the strikes did not involve any U.S. aircraft based on land in the Gulf nations.

One additional factor that may have forced Mr. Clinton's hand is the finding that some Arab nationals were involved in a plot to destroy targets on the U.S. soil. This strike sends a warning to nations that might be found to be involved.

Lesson for Baghdad: The U.S. Defence Secretary, Mr. Les Aspin, gave out a lot of mumbo jumbo of how the Iraqi intelligence people oppress Kurds, kill political opponents, harass U.N. personnel etc. but all these are to be looked after by the U.N., not the U.S. Nothing further is going to come out of this episode but one psychological fallout of the attack will be that Baghdad now knows the new U.S. administration might also use any flouting of U.N. resolutions and strike again. In any case the U.S.-Iraq (no war) standoff is over. Arab official reactions are irrelevant as they mildly incorporate not official but popular sentiment.

Though the trial has yet to conclude and Kuwait has cried 'wolf' once too often, in this case there should be little doubt that Mr. Saddam Husayn had sought to have his final say in his feud with Mr. Bush. He just doesn't seem to comprehend the realities of power.

Most Indians would recall that immediately after the Bombay bomb blasts of March 12 it was this very U.S. administration that had cautioned India against any precipitate action against Pakistan and advised New Delhi to address the issue through the various international institutions available for the purpose. Realistically, however, in military terms the Indo-Pakistan equation differs vastly from that between the U.S. and Iraq or Israel and the South Lebanon-based Hezbollah.

After what happened in Bombay many Indians would probably support what Mr. Clinton has done and wish their own Government had more spine.

Where the Clinton administration has messed up is in the timing in so far as international law is concerned. It could have awaited the verdict.

On the other hand, Mr. Clinton's domestic image has plummeted to very low levels and he has been under fire for not showing leadership on Bosnia, thus being a partial self-appointed world policeman. In Arab capitals this impression gained further ground after the relentless attack on the Somali warlord, Gen. Mohammed Farah Aided. American commentators argue that Mr. Clinton's standing would have diminished further had he not acted.

'New Vista of Intolerance'

93AS1106C Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 28 Jun 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Uncivilised Attack"]

[Text] Super power belligerence crosses new vistas of intolerance with the pounding of select sites of Iraqi intelligence. The lessons of the Gulf war do not seem to have been learnt by the two major parties involved in the battle. Neither Iraq, the provocateur (then), nor the US, the angry, big brother seem to be heeding to history, if their activities are anything to go by. If the plot to assassinate the former US President Mr. George Bush, is a reprehensible act, the firing of 23 Tomahawk missiles at what the US says are Iraqi intelligence headquarters is an irresponsible act not commensurate with the responsibilities that go with being a Super Power nation. Evidence, irrespective of however convincing and strong, is no provocation for one country to attack another, without warning. And evidence, in the present case is too flimsy for the US to attack what it naively considers intelligence headquarters. When you fire 23 powerful missiles at a given target, only the callous and the irresponsible can say that there would be no civilian casualties. When fundamentalist Iran passed a fatwa and asked death squads to kill Rushdie, Britain did not respond by pummelling Teheran. When there is all round recognition of Pakistan as an abettor of insurgency in parts of India, and where mountainous evidence is piling up to prove such a dangerous scheme, India is neither retaliating similarly, nor is it pounding Islamabad mercilessly. That is just not the way nations should carry on their business. For a nation that acts as the global policemen when it comes to human rights abuse, the US should have behaved more responsibly and acted with caution. Having razed to the ground various buildings and killed many civilians, what possible justification does the US have in moving the Security Council? There is no

doubt that the Security Council will whitewash the whole episode, proving, if further proof is necessary, that the United Nations is nothing but a flag of convenience for the mighty and powerful.

Editorial: 'U.S. Overreaction'

93AS1106D Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
29 Jun 93 p 8

[Text] The stern enforcement of "civilised behaviour" on an admittedly pariah regime was probably not the only objective behind the unfortunate American decision to launch a missile attack on the Iraqi intelligence headquarters in Baghdad which took a toll of civilian lives as well. Several other factors, not unrelated to President Clinton's current domestic problems which have made him bemoan the absence of the customary honeymoon of a new President with the American people, undoubtedly played a crucial role in persuading him to order the peremptory attack and present the world with a *fait accompli*. The fact that the American move received unqualified support only from a close ally like Britain and a Russia preoccupied with its own economic and political difficulties is noteworthy. Other partners of the Gulf war, like France, have been more reserved, while Egypt has been quick to emphasise the glaring discrepancy between the meting out of a sudden shocking punishment to Iraq and the prolonged hesitancy over becoming involved in a currently far more distressing theatre of conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Indeed, it may well be to dispel the perception of being indecisive, even pusillanimous, that the Clinton administration used the opportunity provided by the reported confession by two suspects of the planned attack on Mr. George Bush to unleash the missile attack.

As the experience of Mr. Bush as President has shown, a flexing of military muscle goes a long way to boost a leader's stature. It is not impossible, therefore, that the hammer-blow against Iraq will help President Clinton to some extent to improve his popularity ratings, currently at a historic low for a first-term President mainly because of his propensity to become involved in debilitating controversies ranging from the induction of homosexuals in the army to the appointment of the attorney-general. This is not to deny Iraq's role in acts of terrorism which the alleged attempt on Mr. Bush's life high-lighted, although, even in this matter, some may wonder whether the "confessions" were enough for such a prompt retaliation. Iraq's alienation from its neighbours and uneasy relationship with the rest of the world ever since the unwarranted attack on Kuwait probably persuaded the U.S. to court the risk of acting in a bullying manner reminiscent of the punitive actions against Libya, Grenada and Panama. But to most people it smacked of an over-reaction, born of arrogance, which could easily have been avoided by at least waiting for the completion of the trial in Kuwait and the pronouncement of the judgment, and also by acting under U.N. aegis as in the Gulf war.

Flaws in U.S. Case

93AS1106E Madras INDIAN EXPRESS in English
29 Jun 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Iraqi's Agony"]

[Text] Iraq has already suffered so much as a result of its continuing confrontation with the UN since the end of the Gulf War two years ago. Now it has had the misfortune of becoming the victim directly of American wrath rather than a UN rebuff. Baghdad's main interest lies in trying to seize the opportunity offered by Sunday night's attack on Iraq's intelligence headquarters with American cruise missiles in order to enlist more sympathy for itself in the UN. The Iraqis, for instance, would be happy if the attack were widely denounced as an act of political vendetta by the lone superpower now free to behave like a bully. Judging by the deliberations of the Security Council on the American action, however, their hopes on this score are likely to be belied.

The issue really is not one of legal validity of the US action in terms of the self-defence article of the UN Charter. What is more relevant is that the US has apparently convinced the other members of the Security Council that Iraqi intelligence was indeed involved in a plot to assassinate the ex-President of the US, George Bush, in Kuwait last April. Madeline Albright, the US representative, termed the plot as a "terrorist operation" and asserted that it was planned, equipped and launched by the Iraqi Intelligence. She stressed that the missile assault was aimed at "the instruments of terror". The Iraqi denial of the alleged plot cut no ice. Besides, recent terrorist incidents in the US carried out by Islamic activists, must have caused much disquiet both among the Americans and official circles in most member-countries of the UN. That the prevailing climate was conducive to general acceptance of the US allegation about the Iraqi plot was also suggested in the joint statement of the non-aligned members in the Security Council. They not only expressed concern over the Iraqi intelligence's role but also found it necessary to condemn "terrorism in all its forms and manifestations whether directed or practised by or against an individual or state."

The American case is certainly not free from flaws. It is, for instance, natural to ask why the Clinton administration did not wait for the completion of the on-going trial in Kuwait of the Iraqis who have confessed to have been involved in the plot in question. The US would have been on stronger ground to retaliate if these Iraqis were convicted. Inevitably, many in the US wonder, after making due allowance for Saddam Hussein's belligerence, whether signs of a fall in President Clinton's popularity at home might not have prompted the US attack. Sadly, the current rise in tension in West Asia has threatened a setback to the chances of the UN easing the economic sanctions against Iraq. The non-aligned members in particular must try and see that this does not happen. By all accounts, the agony of the common Iraqis on account of shortages is increasing by the day.

Russia's 'Buckling' to U.S. Pressure Seen Threat to Relations

93AS1056D Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
23 Jul 93 p 8

[Article by S. Nihal Singh: "Dealt Out of Hand"]

[Text]

The rocket controversy should end any remaining illusions regarding India's relations with Moscow.

The calling off of Russia's cryogenic rocket deal with India is a psychological watershed in relations between the two countries. One would have imagined the disintegration of the Soviet Union and Russia's desire to pursue its foreign policy in conformity with new national interests were loud enough signals.

But at the popular and some policy making levels India continued to nurture the illusion the old relationship with the bulk of what was the Soviet Union was not entirely finished. When Mr Boris Yeltsin came calling and thumpingly endorsed the rocket engine deal, the emotional content of the old relationship seemed to flower again. Even if in a muted form.

Yet for anyone observing the Russian scene without blinkers it was clear the parameters of Moscow's world view had changed, at least for the short term. Russia's top priority became the cultivation of close relations with the West, particularly the United States, to obtain the economic aid and technical assistance necessary to integrate Russia into the world economy and mainstream international politics.

Somewhat belatedly Mr Yeltsin and his foreign policy advisors realised that unlike most of Moscow's ideology based relationships with the third world Russian ties with India were mutually beneficial. It remained so because of India's demand for arms and its ability to provide Russia the goods and services it needed. Mr Yeltsin helped clear the cobwebs surrounding the rupee-rouble dispute, ensuring a constant supply of Indian goods.

There was always an unconvincing element about the implementation of the rocket deal once the US had expressed its displeasure and imposed sanctions on the Russian and Indian space organisations. The Russians would have preferred to go ahead with the deal. But when it became clear the price Moscow would have to pay would be unacceptably high where its primary interests were concerned it had no choice but to back down.

Reneging on the deal was a humiliation for Moscow. There was no concealing the stark fact Russia had to buckle under US pressure because Washington had decided the deal was against its foreign policy interest. Apart from the message this sent the world Moscow had to perforce drink the poison, a phrase used by Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in a different context, in the hope unchallenged US supremacy in the world was not a permanent phenomenon.

The problem for Indo-Russian relations is its having to evolve a mutually beneficial set of arrangements within the ambit of a US imposed world order. None can pretend the termination of the cryogenic rocket deal does not represent

a setback in the process of building closer relations. However sentimentality has no place in international relations. New Delhi must also guard against swinging to the extreme of distrusting Russian motives in future.

Obviously the Indian government will have to readjust its sights by taking into account US interests in its dealings with Moscow. As far as India is concerned, the goals of the US and the erstwhile Soviet Union have been congruous on nuclear non-proliferation. What US armtwisting has achieved now is that Russia has been forced to align its policy with US interpretations of what the third world can be allowed to possess by way of missile technology.

This cannot but represent a limiting factor in Indo-Russian relations. It also throws light on the process Russia is passing through. It is a nation in the midst of economic and political convulsions and must defer to the US while it sets its house in order. There is little doubt Russia will become a major power in perhaps five to 10 years. Until it does, it has to submit to the US's freedom to impose its views and policies.

Apart from economic cooperation and the continuing India need for Russian arms, there are political areas of cooperation between New Delhi and Moscow. One area is the former Soviet central Asia. As the Russian military help in fighting armed rebels on the Afghanistan-Tajikistan border reveals, Moscow is as interested as New Delhi to ward off the threat of Islamic fundamentalism in its southern backyard.

India can help the process of shoring up the new nationalism of the central Asian states against the unwelcome advance of Islamic militants through diplomatic means and by strengthening economic ties. The situation is considerably confusing. Russian spokesmen have suggested these states must make up their minds whether they should belong to the economic cooperation union initiated by Pakistan, Iran and Turkey or to the old Soviet economic space.

Those central Asian states not overwhelmed by problems of survival, such as Tajikistan, have been looking towards other countries to broaden their economic relations. Neighbouring nations are an obvious choice while seeking greater trade and economic interaction. But leaders of the former Soviet states are painfully aware economic links with Russia cannot be snapped for a considerable time.

The point about the public humiliation of Russia at US hands is that India must now regard it not as an ally but just another permanent member of the United Nations security council. Russia not only has a new set of interests to safeguard it must also act within the ambit of what Washington will permit.

The US will not object to the flow of Russian arms, particularly of much needed spares. But there are obvious dangers if India enters into any deals to procure or jointly produce futuristic aircrafts. Russia is quite capable of symbolic gestures proclaiming itself an independent actor on the world stage, but few will be taken in by such bravado.

The Indo-Russian relationship over the next 10 years must be based on the key issues of trade and economic interaction. Given the inventory of India's armed forces, military

links will continue for a considerable period of time. A process of diversifying the sources of arms will gather speed.

The rupee-rouble agreement—the main achievement of Mr Yeltsin's visit to India—has ensured there will be a continuous flow of Indian goods to Russia over a number of years in repayment of old debts. Russians, as well as other members of the erstwhile Soviet Union, are familiar with Indian goods. It would be to India's advantage to enhance the quality of these goods to carve a permanent niche in an increasingly competitive market.

Russians have traditionally been fascinated by all things American. It is a love affair that has taken some hard knocks in recent times. Once the Russian leadership realises India, rather than the US, could provide the answer to many questions regarding trade and commerce given its experience with a mixed economy, new areas of cooperation could open up. At that point New Delhi can develop a Moscow line.

Before Mr Yeltsin decided to make his much postponed visit to India, New Delhi had largely left the pace of the relationship to be set by Moscow on the valid assumption the Russian leadership needed time to sort out its priorities. The Yeltsin visit led the Centre to believe although the former's priorities continued to lie predominantly with the West, the US in particular, he had evidently recognised the merits of keeping the relationships with China and India in good state.

It, however, remains to be seen whether the present Russian leadership has had second thoughts on pursuing an independent policy towards China and India. At the very least, the repudiation of the rocket deal with India means Moscow has no option but to make its Asia policy subservient to US interests. This development is not surprising, except for those viewing Moscow through a sentimental haze, because Russia had earlier decided to endorse the essence of US policy in west Asia. It is now for India to draw the right conclusions.

Concern Over U.S., PRC Sales to Pakistan

93AS1136A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
31 Jul 93 p 7

[Text] New Delhi, July 30 (PTI): Serious concern was expressed in the Rajya Sabha over the sale of long-range M-11 missiles by China to Pakistan and seven-fold increase in U.S. arms sales to Pakistan.

Making a special mention, Mr Suresh Kalmadi, Cong. said India was being discriminated in the matter of transfer of technology. He criticized the pressure on Russia by the U.S. to deny India the cryogenic rocket technology recently.

Moreover, the U.S. chose to ignore China selling missile technology to Pakistan and brought no sanctions against it, he said adding it was a clear act of discrimination against India.

He also expressed serious concern that the M-11 missiles could be used by Pakistan to launch nuclear weapons.

In another special mention, Mr V. Narayanasamy, Cong. expressed concern at the seven-fold increase in U.S. arms sales to Pakistan during the last two years.

He said money received by Pakistan from the U.S. under the narcotics control program was being diverted for military expenditure.

Mr Narayanasamy urged the government to take up the matter with the U.S. administration to stop indiscriminate supply of arms to Pakistan.

U.S. Positions on Country's Interests Seen Unrealistic

93AS1071C New Delhi INDIA TODAY in English
31 Jul 93 pp 48-49, 51-52

[Article by Shekhar Gupta: "Bill's Busy Right Now"]

[Text] Oh, what do we do with India?" said the US Congressman, throwing up his arms. That one gesture and statement underlined the crux of the relationship between the world's two largest democracies and also the factors bedeviling it. With questions of nuclear proliferation, human rights and intellectual property rights figuring in an increasingly concerned US Congress so woefully ignorant of realities, the Indo-US relationship is under tremendous strain at a rare juncture when the strategic interests of the two democracies happen to coincide.

This happened on a routine, hourly Delta shuttle flight from Washington National airport to New York that we, the Indian participants at the Asia Society-India Today-Centre for Policy Research seminars on Indo-US relations, happened to board last month. Half-a-dozen Congressmen walked in as well, apparently returning to their home towns over the weekend. Almost immediately a senior Asia Society official stood up to greet the Congressmen and told them about the seminars, the need to bring back India into focus in the US and so on. The response elicited from the Congressmen ranged from apparent concern to barely disguised disgust.

Several sessions at the seminars, attended by the most prominent India specialists at the US think-tanks, congressional aides, policymakers and executives from companies hoping to do business with India, followed by a week of interviews with policymakers in Washington made the picture clearer. In the new world order, where the new security architecture in Europe and international trade concerns top the foreign policy agendas, and in the new US domestic order, where economic issues take precedence over everything else, India has been relegated to the back-burner in Washington.

Worse, were it not for the trinity of negative concerns—nuclear proliferation, human rights and terrorism, and intellectual property rights—India, and in fact, South Asia would disappear from the edges of the radar screen, to use a favorite expression of Washington policymakers. Another potential problem area in Indo-US relations could be India's missile program, particularly the Cryogenic engine deal with Russia. Mitchell Reiss, a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson Centre whose congressional testimony on the South Asian nuclear issue recently hit the headlines in India, says: "The Gandhi years poisoned the well here. The interest in India died and you lost a whole generation

of scholars who turned to other parts of Asia. But now India is coming up on the scope again."

There are different explanations for this apathy. Practically everybody, from harried Indian diplomats fighting one desperate crisis on Capitol Hill after another as the growing lobby of critical Congressmen come up with anti-India bills, to the top officials of the State Department and the National Security Council, blames it on the fact that India has never been cast in a strong role: friend, adversary or even a trading partner or rival.

In the Cold War era, it was at least cast in a role as a half-ally of the Soviets but today, there is total confusion about its position in the world. There is also confusion about the policy and status of an India not led by the Gandhi-Nehru dynasty. "In the past, your country was always led by very big people. Mrs Gandhi, Rajiv, people with well known policies who personified India. This has now changed and the Americans have difficulties focusing on nations not personified by leaders," said Donald Graham, president of THE WASHINGTON POST.

Selig Harrison, renowned India scholar and co-author of the recent and oft-quoted Carnegie Endowment report on Indo-US relations says the lack of interest about India in Washington is not new. "It is a new manifestation of an old problem. The failure to give India the importance it deserves is not sound thinking on our part," he says and points to the contradictions that beset Indo-US relations. He explains the dilemma: "People like us say that the US should be friendly with India because India will become a major power. But then, many Americans react by saying that, OK, let's stop it from becoming one."

There is also widespread scepticism about India's long-term position in the world, exemplified by a recent article in the conservative Washington-based NATIONAL INTEREST magazine titled *The Loser-India in the Nineties*. The author, Ross H. Munro, a former TIME magazine bureau chief in New Delhi, argues as to why the US should show so much interest in India when China is forging ahead so decisively. Stephen P. Cohen, prominent South Asian security expert, says part of the blame lies with India. "The Americans thought India would emerge as a regional power, but by accommodating its smaller neighbors. It's the failure to do this that prevents India from realizing its true status in Washington," he says.

The other factor is the Clinton Administration's preoccupation with its own problems. "Let's face facts," said a senior US policymaker, "Until the Clinton Administration gets its own act together, there is going to be no movement on South Asia."

Yet the paradox is that while there is so little interest in India at the official level it is at the congressional level that India has come under sharp focus, almost entirely on negative considerations. Republican Dan Burton from Indiana says: "India has to be restrained. The things that are going on in Bosnia pale in many respects beside what they are doing behind the steel curtain in Punjab and Kashmir." Furthermore, Congressmen who keep firing one salvo after another at India, show a remarkable ignorance of the realities, raving and ranging about the "persecution of Christians in Nagaland".

Last month, there were at least 10 amendments on resolutions censuring India over its human rights record in Kashmir and Punjab in the Congress, the result of tenacious lobbying by Patricia Gossman, the diminutive researcher of Asiawatch as well as pro-Khalistani and Pakistani lobbyists. Some of the amendments were passed and one, rather significantly, was defeated narrowly 231 to 202. When Ambassador Sidhartha Shankar Ray called one of the key Congressmen to personally thank him for support, the US lawmaker gently warned him to look at the final tally, the number of votes against, and the prospect of the balance tilting the next time "unless things improved in India". No wonder that when a visibly disturbed Ray returned to India on a fortnight's visit he made Kashmir his first stop to "see things firsthand".

Ray rues the fact that while "our concerns on security have been appreciated in Washington, terrorism and the danger it poses has not been understood". He agrees that India's image is at its nadir in the US as nothing has been done to enhance it. Last fortnight in New Delhi, he made an inspired bid to convince South Block of the need to hire a professional lobbyist in Washington. He even submitted a short list of lobbying firms.

Aggressive lobbying is desperately needed for India in a situation where negative, peripheral concerns dominate its relationship with the most significant power in the world. There are, however, some Congressmen who see the need for a better understanding of India. Democratic Congressman Frank Pallone from New Jersey says: "There is a need for US policymakers to understand the real background of India's problems with terrorism and human rights." Gary L. Ackerman, Democratic Congressman from New York, agrees: "Excessive pressure on India at this point would be counter-productive. It is hardly likely that Indians would allow themselves to be bought off for a nickel per person in US development assistance." State Department officials say even they are hard put to it to control the damage on the Hill when, at other levels, relations seem to be improving.

But there is plenty of confusion even among policymakers. I asked three senior US officials dealing with India to rank the three contentious issues—nuclear proliferation, human rights and intellectual property rights—in order of precedence. Each one put a different issue on top of the agenda. But the central fact is that the relationship is not finding attention at the topmost levels of policymaking. "This administration is still finding its feet. We see no need to finalize policy on the whole world, from Albania to Zimbabwe in the first 24 hours," said a top official underlining the argument that India could take time.

Both Indian and US officials admit that the dialogue on the nuclear question has by now become a lot more reasonable. There has been some movement on the question of intellectual property rights (IPRS) though US officials seem more impatient on this issue. "Given its own emerging strength in software, India should join the patent regime most willingly rather than be seen dragged kicking and screaming," said William Clarke, former US ambassador to India and now an assistant secretary of state. US officials also plead that India understand the IPRS issue "better" in the sense that it should give up the belief that it is being singled out for "punishment". Also, as it is a problem the US has with several countries, it cannot make an exception in India's case.

It is the human rights issue that continues to bedevil the relationship. The current congressional assault is totally centered on Kashmir and Punjab and most US officials dealing with the region and thus even having a vested interest in the improvement in relationship wish the issues would just go away. Sympathetic officials point out that it is a 'political correct' concern in today's America and as congressional records show, it is nearly impossible to find anyone to speak against this concern. "Your guys don't realize the seriousness of the issue. Even on an issue like the rehabilitation of Naramda oustees, your country is being slaughtered," said one official. Privately, however, the officials say they would be happy if India could sort out Kashmir the way it did the Punjab issue. "Punjab has shown a tremendous improvement though we would rather that India added a little carrot to the stick in Kashmir as well, as was the case in Punjab," says a senior policymaker. The US view seems to be that the map of the subcontinent should not change and the pressure brought upon Pakistan because of this is intense.

Says John Mallot, interim director for South Asia who hit the headlines for his statements during his visit to India in May: "Having dealt with India in an earlier era, I can see a 180-degree turn in what the situation used to be. Our talks in Delhi were excellent. Your people gave as good as they got and the candor was very encouraging." Mallot thinks "our pressure on Pakistan (on Kashmir) is working and even India accepts that". He also says his discussions with Rajesh Pilot were very fruitful and "we support him in his efforts to establish a political dialogue in Kashmir". But he still wonders what went wrong on his visit to Delhi when his "innocent and honest" opinions in Delhi caused such a sharp reaction. "Why was so much venom flung at me? Perhaps the old speak dies slowly," he says wryly.

On his return from India, Mallot called for brainstorming sessions in the State Department to discuss what went wrong and believes that perhaps there is a psychological dimension to the whole question, that Indians perhaps culturally do not like to hear criticism from friends. But the central point is something else, the difference between the priority that each nation accords in its relations with the other. So anything a US official says in India is bound to be examined with a fine tooth comb particularly if it happens to refer to old contentious issues like Kashmir or nuclear proliferation.

It is because of this old baggage that the dominant view now seems to be that while old problems remain, it is business that could drive an Indo-US relationship. The support to Indian economic liberalization is virtually unqualified and while there is no real excitement about it as in the case of China, there is real interest. Robert L. Hardgrave, professor and veteran India analyst at the University of Texas points out that there is more US investment in and around the city of Shanghai than in all of India. And that's a crucial difference. "It is particularly unfortunate that positive economic changes in India have been followed and dominated by unhappy developments. Ayodhya, the Bombay bombings and now the scandal involving the prime minister, thus grabbing the headlines and coloring perceptions here," he says. Top US officials

feel that as more American businessmen go to India, economic linkages could drive the relationship rather than politics.

But even here India has moved at a tardy pace. Sources in the Indian Embassy point out that more than 400 MOUS [memoranda of understanding] signed with American companies have been stuck in the bureaucracy for months leading to frustration and a loss of interest in the business circles here. "The problem is the regulations are gone but the regulators are still there," says Clarke, blaming Indian bureaucracy for blocking even political decisions. Executives of the US companies express disgust with Indian bureaucratic delays across the board. "Only two problems remain in your country now," said a top executive of a multinational, "the hopelessness of dealing with your bureaucracy and the fear of flying Indian Airlines." Ray has taken business as his first priority.

Even Stephen Solarz, the US Ambassador-designate to India, intends to treat this as his top priority: to get business going so that the rest could follow automatically. At the political level, there is an awakening of some interest and the 53-page report of the Carnegie Endowment Task Force on India-US relations after the Cold War is being discussed in detail.

The report, co-authored by old India hand Selig Harrison and nuclear non-proliferationist Geoffrey Kemp, paints a rosy scenario, lauding India for managing its internal problems and underlining a "growing recognition of converging geo-political interests and shared democratic and secular values replacing mutual distrust of the past". The report also points to the threat of growing Islamic fundamentalism and predicts India and US sharing security concerns in the future. But realists on the Hill and the think-tanks say the report could turn out to be too optimistic unless India got its lobbying act together and at least gave a push to the trade and business relationship.

'Dirty Business Tactics' Seen Behind U.S. Move on Rocket Technology

93AS1056C Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
20 Jul 93 p 7

[Article by Aabha Dixit: "Beware the Technology Cartel"]

[Text]

The US's tough anti-proliferation stance is nothing more than dirty business tactics.

The attempted sale of cryogenic rockets and requisite technology by the Russian firm, Glavkosmos, to the Indian Space Research Organisation [ISRO] has caused diplomatic waves in a manner rare for a commercial deal. The United States, flexing its muscles with Moscow and New Delhi, restricted the deal to the sale of engines without any accompanying transfer of technology. It claims to be enforcing the guarantees of the missile technology control regime [MTCR], an arrangement to which neither Russia nor India are party.

The extraordinary amount of arm-twisting done by the Clinton administration upon cash starved Russia comes at a time when Washington is urging other countries to allow

free access to US goods in their domestic markets. At the Group of Seven summit Mr Bill Clinton spoke about the need to create a level playing field and reach an early conclusion to the Uruguay round of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. On the other hand US governments, Republican and Democratic, have invoked punitive action under their domestic laws to prevent the entry of additional competitors into the lucrative satellite launch business.

The big question is whether the US interprets the new world order according to its domestic needs or strives to bring about an international consensus on critical security issues. It is the latter that would boost the chances of "real" disarmament.

The cryogenic rocket deal was a strictly bilateral arrangement for the transfer of technologies for civilian purposes. The agreement was signed before the former Soviet Union disintegrated and reaffirmed after the new government in Moscow came up with its own missile proliferation guidelines.

The deal became the focus of attention in Washington last year at a time when the US Congress was attempting to deny China most favoured nation status because of its missile sales to Pakistan, Iran and Syria. Congress's concern over missile proliferation can easily be understood. But its imposition of its will upon other countries can be legitimately questioned.

Time and again both Russian and Indian scientists have sought to point out cryogenic engines cannot be used for missiles designed for defence purposes. The lead time to get the engines operational is reported to be one month. This is a period of time no army would consider acceptable. What use would Agni or Prithvi be if it took one month to prepare them for launch. War in south Asia has traditionally come without warning and seldom lasted beyond 25 days.

Washington's narrow and literalistic interpretation of the MTCR lends credence to another viewpoint—the US wants to use its domestic non-proliferation laws to preserve for the US companies the huge lead they have in the space launching business. The Chinese are already threatening this monopoly and are reportedly offering launch facilities at a third of the US asking price. Beijing's launch success rate compares well with the Russian-Kazakhstan and US cartels.

There is an uncanny similarity of membership patterns in the three ad hoc restrictive regimes—the nuclear suppliers group [NSG], the Australia group and the MTCR. With the exception of Japan they are all white populated nations. All are economically advanced.

A perusal of these regimes' exhaustive lists, all continually upgraded, reveals that no technology with the remotest use in either chemical and nuclear weapons or missiles is exempted. This gives them a virtual veto over the technological ambitions of many countries, even in non-military fields. By using the logic of non-proliferation this white group is able to control the spread of technology and safeguard their economic interests.

ISRO is not the only Indian agency coming under pressure from the countries that are cartelising high technology in different spheres. The Tarapur nuclear power plant controversy is also bound to erupt into a legal and technological battle between the US and India. New Delhi asserts that notwithstanding a US law passed in 1978 forbidding cooperation with countries outside the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, the original 1963 agreement between the countries supersedes all other later agreements with respect to the power plant. Particularly after the 30 years treaty period is over.

New Delhi's contention is that it is free to use the Tarapur plant in any manner it sees fit. There are reports the plant can be operated for another 10 to 12 years using MOX [mixed oxide] fuel. Washington has shown uncharacteristic rigidity in demanding the plant be completely shut down to ensure no reprocessing of the enriched uranium takes place after 1993.

Non-proliferation concerns appear to be a poor facade to the real motive of ensuring India does not get a reprocessing facility built at 1963 costs.

The US position on not allowing reprocessing in Tarapur is illogical as the facility is already under International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. New Delhi will not want to alter its status after the 30 year agreement lapses.

The Tarapur tangle is being used by Washington to send a message to all states which have signed nuclear agreements during the Sixties and Seventies. Washington has made it a test case. It hopes to make it a precedent for other agreements once they reach their expiry period.

Another area where US pressure has been unrelenting is in the transfer of supercomputers. After the controversy of the early Eighties the decision to develop supercomputers through the parallel processing method has completely changed the equation between Washington and New Delhi on the issue. With Param parallel processors ready to enter the market Washington is being badgered by US companies to allow the sale of supercomputers to India and elsewhere. The Param supercomputer costs less than one fifth of the comparable Cray model and is reported to be as effective.

Rather than taking the view of US entrepreneurs Washington has initiated moves to ensure the future development of Param is stunted by invoking the MTCR and NSG to deny technology to India.

The ISRO-Glavkosmos deal attracted considerable attention in the US. Despite the brave words of Mr U. R. Rao the ISRO chief's meeting with top US authorities earlier this year did not go off well. ISRO will still be on the ban list through most of 1994 as well. His meetings with Russian officials in Moscow obviously did not solve anything. With Washington's announcement Russia has agreed to not transfer the cryogenic technology it is clear ISRO's words were little more than wishful thinking.

The reason for Russia's decision is fairly obvious. It could either stand up to the US and risk losing billions of dollars in aid or renege on the cryogenic deal and hope this would be Washington's last demand before the aid starts pouring in. Moscow would have been in the dock one way or the

other. The failure to honour the deal sends an ominous message as to how much Russian power has shrunk.

The pressure Washington applied on these two issues should alarm as well as alert the two scientific establishments in India. They have run their affairs without accountability and performance evaluation. No doubt they deserve praise for their efforts to virtually reinvent the wheel in the fields of nuclear and space technology. But working in a closed environment carries the pitfall of not realising how isolated these two critical establishments are becoming.

The mood in the US Congress has been evident for over two years. There are literally a spate of resolutions, all decidedly anti-India, waiting to be passed. All will put even more barriers before New Delhi in its quest for technology.

Rather than raise the stakes through unnecessary media attention, ISRO and the atomic establishment should undertake comprehensive reviews of means to beat the ban. The emphasis should be on achieving self-reliance in high technology areas rather than making the launch of a geostationary satellite launch vehicle the only object of its space programme. The continuance of the launch programme is imperative. But the rigours of being pressured by external powers can be averted if a relative autonomy is achieved by harnessing domestic technology.

Identification of technologies presently unavailable need to be made and small action groups be entrusted with finding answers. This way reliance on foreign technology will be greatly reduced. India would be able to withstand any amount of pressure on the issue.

China perfected this process of creating small, target oriented groups to accomplish near self-sufficiency in their missile programmes. Now Western countries seek collaboration with Beijing. It also allowed China to keep the aggressive businessmen masquerading as non-proliferationists on the defensive.

U.S. Pressure Over Rocket Deal Decried

93AS1070B Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
24 Jul 93 p 8

[Editorial: "Pax Americana"]

[Text] The contract, signed on January 1, 1991, between the Indian Space Research Organization and Glavkosmos involving transfer of cryogenic engines and related technology became almost infructuous in May 1992 when the Bush Administration imposed sanctions on both parties. In spite of President Boris Yeltsin's promise on a visit to New Delhi in January this year, to stand by the deal and defy pressures, a greatly weakened Russia has not been able to stand up to the rich nations which have committed \$3 billion immediately and \$43 billion later, on condition that it adhere to the Missile Technology Control Regime [MTCR]. The agreement reached in Washington, between the USA and Russia is compounded by the humiliation that Russia will not be compensated for the loss of the Indian contract, estimated at \$400 million. Russian agencies have been assured of business worth \$1 billion in launching American satellites, but the actual figure may not exceed \$700 million. India's arm is being twisted less

blatantly but no less firmly. Big Brother condescends to let India have some cryogenic engines but without the technology, and a new agreement must be reached. Mrs Lynn Davis, Under-Secretary of State for International Security Affairs and head of the U.S. delegation to the Washington talks with the Russians, had no answer to the question what new information provided by Russia has suddenly convinced the USA that the rocket deal violates the MTCR. Her excuse was that understanding the provisions of the MTCR takes time. That a new irritant has been added to Indo-U.S. relations, and on this occasion it is not India's fault, clearly does not bother her.

The Indian response is measured. Matching Russia's plea of "unforeseen circumstances," the Foreign Office spokesman in New Delhi avoids a direct reference to the USA and mentions only reports "in the media over the last few days regarding discussions between the Governments of the U.S. and Russia and between Russia and India." For all the rhetoric of Mr R.N. Sinha, director of the National Aeronautical Laboratory, which now collaborates with Russia on a light transport aircraft project, the Indian space programme badly needs a supply of cryogenic engines. The perspective must not be lost. The country is not yet ready with the infrastructure to be able to use the engines; it is necessary to guard against the danger of over-reaction. President Clinton too has to recognize the dangers. He has humiliated President Yeltsin before his people and greatly strengthened his domestic opponents, something that the Americans protest is not their intention and not in their interests. Glavkosmos' resolve to defy the Foreign Ministry and fulfil the contract is an indication of the popular mood in Russia. Coming close on the heels of the attack on Baghdad, the Americans are feeding the argument heard in India, Russia and perhaps elsewhere that the cold war had its uses. Perhaps President Clinton is working on a new book—How to lose friends and alienate people.

'Subservience' to U.S. Blamed for Rocket Deal Collapse

93AS1093H Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
28 Jul 93 p 8

[Article by Ashok Mitra: "League Against America"]

[Text]

The cryogenic rocket deal should make it clear subservience to the US does not pay.

If you have tears prepare to shed them now for the poor United States of America. To be the world's only super-power can indeed only guarantee a time without respite. Consider the schedule for the past one month.

On the domestic front, the US president's popularity ratings had to be jacked up. Therefore the necessity of choice, raining of missiles on Iraq. The United Nations peacekeeping force, so called, in Somalia—described by about everyone as a force intended to further US hegemony—had to make war in order to keep peace. It could not be helped if some more natives needed to be liquidated.

Japan on election eve deserved to be bullied into accepting its share of responsibility for reducing the US trade deficit. The North Koreans were getting too big for their boots. They had to be told any further hanky panky about observing the rules of the nuclear non-proliferation treaty and they would be blasted off the face of the earth. Pakistan's military brass had to be instructed to tell the local politicians that enough was enough, Washington wanted them to resolve their squabbles. The local army would meanwhile take charge and a prime minister was being despatched from the World Bank.

The other Group of Seven nations were behaving like finks. This would not do, they had to contribute their fair share to shore up Mr Boris Yeltsin. Any malingering on their part would invite energetic retribution on the part of the US department of commerce on the trade front.

There were other problems. It was getting increasingly difficult to ignore the environment lobby. It constituted a solid vote bank. The vice-president himself was the author of a book on bio-diversity. Even the first lady had occasional eco-friendly flutterings. In the light of all this the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund had to be issued fresh instructions as to which countries, governments and which kind of projects were to be blocked from further funds.

The to be or not to be situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina was embarrassing. But discretion was the better part of valour. Besides, unlike in Somalia, these Serbs and Croats were Caucasian and must not be imposed upon.

The otherwise docile Russians had to be called in and told off. They should harbour no illusions about being an independent nation. Whether they should sell cryogenic rocket technology to India was not a decision they could reach on their own. The Indians equally had to be brought to their senses. Kashmir was not their inalienable property, it was disputed territory. Blast the Shimla agreement, the dispute over there could not be resolved without involving the people of Kashmir. Here was a stop the press item: an Italian general in Somalia had the audacity to refuse to obey US orders.

Once a country attains or is rendered into the position of the world's exclusive superpower certain obligations become impossible to shake off. Whatever dreams or goals it started out with, it cannot defy the imperial mandate. The Americans are now of overwhelming relevance to each of the 170 odd other member countries of the UN. The security council is having to meet round the clock to pass resolution after tiresome resolution endorsing illegitimate US action here, there and everywhere. The other permanent members of the council have foresworn the use of the veto.

But there is a reverse side to the coin. For some countries, not necessarily permanent members of the security council, the emerging situation is tailor-made for causing more than ordinary embarrassment. Total subservience to the superpower is failing to yield the expected dividends. The superpower has other considerations in mind besides catering, for instance, to Indian sentiments.

The most recent decisions on its part—ordering the cancellation of the Indo-Russian agreement on the transfer of cryogenic rocket technology and letting off Pakistan from the charge of being a "terrorist" state—have stunned the authorities in New Delhi. Yet such are the imperatives of the client-master relationship that none has the temerity to question any thought or deed of the superpower.

A country palpably wronged may feel unhappy. It can at most give vent to its emotions by taking it out on someone nearer its size, that too if the superpower does not mind. In the present circumstances it is seemingly inconceivable on the part of the government of India to voice any direct—or even indirect—criticism of the US. That would be, according to received wisdom, tantamount to inviting death.

It is time for India to embark on a cost benefit study of the consequences of 100 percent subservience to the US. Notwithstanding the world's mightiest war machine maintained by that country, backed by overwhelmingly intimidating technological capability, does it help to toe the US line on each and every issue?

Three important gains, either immediate or prospective, are usually listed in support of the decision to be whiningly subservient to the superpower. First, the US administration is in a position to order the IMF and the World Bank not to switch off the flow of fresh loans to India, thereby saving the country from the predicament of failing to meet the servicing obligations on account of past loans.

Second, were they in a generous mood Americans would allow into their country larger quantities of Indian merchandise. This would help India to attain a healthier balance on its trade account.

Finally, the dream makers in New Delhi lean on the hope that as long as they are prepared to be outlandishly submissive to the US administration the latter will do something to improve the country's international credit rating. This will ensure a gushing inflow of private capital funds from overseas.

India is on weak grounds on all three counts. Kashmir, Punjab, Ayodhya, Assam and the other continuing uncertainties on the domestic front make it somewhat improbable direct foreign investment will show any surge in the foreseeable future. Other areas of the world, particularly eastern Europe, would be of much greater attraction to investors.

It is an equally naive proposition that out of the goodness of their heart the US would allow entry of a larger quantum of Indian goods than now. Threats held under the "Special" and "Super 301" provisions of the US Trade Act have an altogether different story to tell. The US economy remains in deep recession, employment is not rising and there is a persistent clamour that international fellow feeling be hanged, domestic jobs must not be jeopardised for the sake of pleasing foreign nations. The pressures currently mounted by the US administration are actually intended to compel India to cut back its exports, especially of traditional items like textiles and footwear.

As regards the danger looming from a failure to meet external debt servicing obligations, the most sensible thing

would be to play it by ear and pick hints from the example of what other countries have experienced. Brazil and Argentina, laden with a huge stockpile of past indebtedness, have asked for and been permitted to reschedule their repayments. The same dispensation has been accorded to Mr Yeltsin's Russia. If the cards are played with some finesse India would be able to strike an analogous deal.

The gains of servility are mostly illusory. The cost of obsequiousness to the superpower on the other hand hardly needs any meticulous accounting. Its ingredients touch our daily living. In the circumstances a simple fact of life deserves attention. If all the sundry powers are equally servile to the US none of them can hope to obtain a differential advantage over others from its servile conduct. India surrenders its dignity and sense of self-respect and achieves precious little in exchange.

India is not the only country humiliated beyond measure by recent US officiousness. It is easy to name a couple of dozen countries that have been at the receiving end of identically rude treatment. The nonaligned movement has gone the way of all flesh. The Group of 77 formed at various United Nations fora is at present in deep hibernation.

There is nonetheless scope for a new formation with the main objective of mobilising courage to look the US administration in the eye. One can here allude to a hypothesis which in economics textbooks is described as the isolation paradox. When the conditions are arctic none will be prepared to jump in the lake all by himself or herself. Should several individuals however agree to jump in the lake all at the same time this inhibition will be overcome.

It is a version of the more familiar proposition I shall be prepared to pay my taxes as long as my neighbours are also coaxed into paying their taxes. Who knows, India could yet provide the lead to cut through the isolation paradox in the sphere of international relations and organise a meaningful network of protest stretching across the continents against US overlordship. When the moment arrives even the worm turns.

The insult meted out in the cryogenic rocket deal could herald the arrival of the moment. Or perhaps the sentiment is just another bland instance of hoping against hope.

Resistance to U.S. 'High-Handedness' Urged

93AS1124A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English
21 Jul 93 p 16

[Editorial: "Ugly American Again"]

[Text] A number of recent American decisions have jolted Indian policy-makers out of their comforting assumption that a Democratic administration in Washington would be more accommodative of New Delhi's concerns and interests. These decisions have, no doubt, also come as a rude shock to all those who believed that there was something "special" to Indo-U.S. ties, now that the Indian economy is being sought to be integrated with the global economy as per Washington's preference. The bullish manner in which Washington forced Moscow to back out of the cryogenic engines deal with India reeks of superpower arrogance.

What is also evident is that the American responses to India remain mired in the outdated cold war calculations which are far removed from the lofty idealism the Clinton administration claims to be subscribing to. While the State Department and American legislators are usually generous with their advice and criticism about how India should conduct itself in Kashmir, Washington cannot bring itself to declare Pakistan a terrorist state despite all the evidence of Islamabad aiding and abetting terrorist activities in the valley. If the snub was not insulting enough, Ms Robin Lynn Raphel, the new assistant secretary of state for South Asia, has gone out of her way not only to describe "the whole of Kashmir as a disputed territory" but has also sought involvement in negotiations of "the people of Kashmir," an euphemism for the secessionist outfits, trained and armed in Pakistan.

The cumulative impact of these different American moves and utterances is unsettling, to say the least. It is also obvious that sooner than later a coherent Indian response to the newly-emerging American high-handedness will have to be formulated. Admittedly, India finds itself disadvantageously placed now that Moscow is no longer a countervailing power. Nevertheless, the Indian policy-makers will have to shed their current defeatist outlook, so poignantly captured in the external affairs minister Mr Dinesh Singh's dejected remark "What can we do?" in the face of western attempts to twist India's arm. However, any credible defence of India's legitimate geo-political interests in and beyond South Asia cannot be mounted as long as New Delhi continues to subscribe to the capitulationist argument that annoying the Americans is not a very smart idea. India cannot and must not give up the tradition of mobilising public opinion at home and abroad in defence of its interest whenever the United States starts acting like a bully.

Center Scorned for Not Standing Up to U.S. Pressure

93AS1129A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 17 Jul 93 p 9

[Article: "Government Flayed for Not Standing Up to U.S. Pressures"]

[Text] New Delhi, July 16. A sharp criticism of the Government for not standing up to pressures from the U.S. and other western powers, marked a meeting of the Consultative Committee of MPs [members of Parliament] attached to the Ministry of External Affairs, here today.

The criticism, cutting across party lines, focused on two recent U.S. moves regarded by members as hostile to India—its decision not to place Pakistan on its list of terrorist States, and attempt to block Russia's cryogenic engine deal with India.

Sources said that the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Dinesh Singh, still recovering from his recent illness, expressed helplessness saying there was very little India could do in the changed circumstances following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the U.S. as a sole superpower.

"What can we do?" he is reported to have asked, throwing up his hands in despair. About the cryogenic engine deal,

the ball was in Russia's court. If Russia did not honour the deal, it reflected that country's failure to keep its commitments. He replied in the negative when asked specifically if the deal was on or was being modified.

About the U.S. decision not to place Pakistan on the list of terrorist States, he said it had done so in its own national interest.

Opposition members were particularly critical saying that in the past few years India's foreign policy had lost its moorings and the attitude was one of increasing helplessness in the face of pressures from outside. One member said that India in fact showed greater guts when it was economically a much weaker country. There was a suggestion that India mobilise the Third World countries to resist Big Power pressures.

Members were not satisfied either with the External Affairs Minister's replies or with the official brief circulated by the Ministry explaining India's position.

One member described the brief as a secondary school essay.

Medicine Patents Seen U.S. Attempt To Control World Economy

93AS1071E *Cochin THE WEEK in English*
18 Jul 93 pp 34-38

[Article by V.K. Santhoshkumar: "Patent Problems"]

[Text] Members of the Delhi-based All India Drug Action Network were shocked recently when an entrepreneur informed them that he could not manufacture any medicine from the neem (margosa) plant, which forms the basis of many of our herbal remedies. The bio-pesticidal properties of the plant had been patented by a Robert Larson of the United States.

John Moore, an American, had a similar experience in 1990 when he approached the Supreme Court of California for a share of the profits that some pharmaceutical companies were making after testing an anti-cancer drug on his spleen. The court agreed that the spleen was his. But it ruled out any share of the profits to him since one of the companies held a patent.

Two quirky incidents? Or a foretaste of a new patent regime? Such experiences would become part of everyday life, if India signs the Dunkel Draft Text (DDT, which its critics quip is an apt abbreviation considering the lethal effect it would have in developing countries) or yields to Super 301 arm-twisting by the United States.

In fact, India has decided to recognize all drug molecules developed after December 31, 1994 under international patent norms, which would have far-reaching effects on our pharmaceutical set-up. After steadfastly maintaining that it would not change its intellectual property regime, India seems to have become a victim of multilateral and bilateral pressures.

"The great Indian compromise occurred in April 1989, when the then commerce secretary A.N. Verma replaced H.P. Shukla as the chief negotiator at the GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) talks in Geneva," says

B.K. Keayla, convener of the National Working Group on Patent Laws, an anti-Dunkel Draft lobby. "The groundwork began during the mid-term review in December 1988 when Verma went to the talks, via Washington. India allowed new issues to be taken up at the talks, and, from then on, Third World countries felt cheated. Now, in a complete lack of will to fight, we have given in to product patent for pharmaceuticals."

India's sudden turnabout is mystifying. At the Uruguay round of GATT, India had fought for preserving the freedom to frame one's own intellectual property regime, taking one's own needs and situation into account. It had also been maintaining that GATT was not the proper forum to discuss intellectual property, which has no direct or significant relationship with international trade. The relevant forums were the World Intellectual Property Organization, UNESCO and UNCTAD [UN Conference on Trade and Development]. In fact, even after the compromise at Geneva, New Delhi said that there was no fundamental change in its stand on TRIPS (trade related intellectual property rights); the agreement was only to discuss TRIPS in the GATT forum which was a diplomatic necessity. But now comes the decision to toe the multinationals' (read USA) line.

Critics point out that the GATT's final draft of December 20, 1991 was not negotiated and that it does not embody the results of the Uruguay round. According to them, the draft offered for discussion at the ministerial meeting in Brussels in December 1990 had stated, within brackets, the views of the developing countries. But Arthur Dunkel, the GATT director-general who retired recently, removed the bracketed portions and presented a draft which reflected only the views of the developed countries.

Says Keayla: "The Dunkel Draft on TRIPS does not reflect the negotiating spirit of the Uruguay round. Developing countries have been forced to adopt the US patent regime. The US will protect worldwide all new inventions, theories, products and ideas and we will be at their mercy. There will be no transfer of technology. The whole idea is that they will transfer goods."

The DDT, the critics point out, transgressed GATT rules. Initially it was agreed that the Uruguay round would be within the framework of GATT. But gradually, new issues—TRIPS, trade related investment measures (TRIMS), trade in services, reduction of subsidies in the agriculture sector and change in the distribution system—which were not in the interest of the developing countries were brought on the agenda. There was a total change of objective from development—like raising the standard of living—to removal of trade barriers. Says Keayla: "Earlier, the negotiating countries had the option of accepting or rejecting a particular part of the agreement, keeping their national interests in view. But that option no longer exists and the package has to be accepted as a whole."

Anti-Dunkelists point out that our laws will have to be amended if we accept the DDT, which impinges even on the Fundamental Rights enshrined in the Constitution. Says Keayla: "Parliament will no longer be the supreme authority for making laws. The DDT says that patents

'shall be available' in all fields of technology, not 'shall be granted'. It is not leaving the authority with the government."

The Indian Patents Act, 1970, will have to be modified substantially. Changes will have to be made in the scope, working, compulsory licensing and revocation of patentability. And a significant change will have to be made in our legal system regarding 'burden of proof'—the onus will be on the accused to prove that he or she has not violated patent rights. It is now the other way around. There is also a provision in the DDT to protect information submitted by the patent applicant for marketing approval. This means that, if any clinical data is classified as secret, our scientists will get no opportunity to assess the product's effect on health.

The DDT also observes that patents shall be available for any invention, whether products or processes, in all fields of technology. So it goes beyond what is patentable according to our patent laws. Only plants, animals, micro-organisms and biological and micro-biological processes are exempt from patentability. For plant varieties, either patent or a new classification system will have to be provided. But this provision will be reviewed four years after signing the DDT. "We cannot know what kind of patent system we will have then," says Keayla.

Another problem is that the exclusive local manufacturing right is taken away from a product patentee. The DDT provides equal rights for imports. If import is to be treated on a par with domestic production, the patent is of no use. Compulsory licensing and sub-licensing, too, will become infructuous. Says Keayla: "These are the most significant parameters of any patent system. The patent granted on any new invention must be worked in the country which gives the patent right. But that kind of provision is not included in the DDT. It implies that import should be treated on a par with domestic production as well as working of the patent. It would be a bad blow on us if the patent holder chooses neither to manufacture nor to import the product."

The DDT has a provision by which a product can be used without authorization of the right-holder: during a national emergency the government can use it for non-commercial purposes and authorize someone else to manufacture the product. "But if the authorization is to be terminated in six months, who will venture into manufacturing?" asks Keayla. "No one will develop technology and wait for a contingency to come. Authorization has no meaning." Besides, the compensation will have to be paid on the economic values of the licence which can be any amount. If the government gives a small amount, the right-holder can call for a judicial review. "He can claim that there was no emergency and that the government unnecessarily authorized the use of the product. This is not in our public interest," says Keayla.

The term of the patent is another matter of apprehension. The DDT says that the term would be 20 years from the

date of application. For chemical-based products, it can be extended by 20 years if a process patent is taken immediately after the product patent expires. By this, monopoly can be retained for a long period. Through a combination of the process patent regime and reversal of burden of proof, it would be possible to monopolize for a much longer period. Says Keayla: "It will be very difficult for other manufacturers to bring out a similar product because, for the first 20 years there would be a brand image and thereafter the possibility of a court case. The new producer will have to prove in court that his process is innovative. That will create an absolute monopoly which the multinationals are looking for."

But the government, which is yet to adopt a clear stand on the Dunkel proposals, is not easily swayed by the scare-mongers. Anwarul Hoda, special secretary in the commerce ministry who is tipped to be the next chief negotiator at GATT, says that in effect a patented product will enter the generic market in eight to nine years since about 11 years would go for research once the product is patented. "Our industry can then manufacture the product. Besides, our laws will be so framed that patent longevity will be curbed," he says.

The government contends that it has achieved something by hard bargaining: the 10-year transitional period, about which the Americans were not happy. But the anti-Dunkelists say that a critical examination of Articles 2, 27, 29, 30, 65 and 70 and also Article 4 of the Paris Convention would show that there is no transitional period. Article 70.8 provides that, in the case of pharmaceuticals and agro-chemicals, the inventors have the right to file applications for product patents after the year of signing the agreement. The patent right would have to be conferred from the date of the application for product patent.

In addition, there is a provision that the applicant can take exclusive marketing rights for five years. Says Keayla: "In such a situation the process patent regime would become totally infructuous. No Indian entrepreneur or scientist would develop a process with such constraints. The country will largely have to depend on imports."

The new intellectual property rights regime does not require that a patentable idea be at a particular stage of development before filing the application. It permits broad definition of the invention so that the applicant may obtain a patent that could involve thousands of chemical compounds of which only a few have been tested. Moreover, it will be possible to obtain four patents for a single pharmaceutical—chemical, composition, process and method-for-use. The expiry of a single patent, say product, will not mean that the drug will lose its patent monopoly as it may still be protected by other patents covering the process or use of the drug.

The main impact will be on the prices of medicines, which will shoot up because of lack of competition. For instance, the popular anti-ulcer drug, Ranitidine, is costlier in countries like Pakistan, USA and the UK which follow the product patent system.

Prohibitive Prices

Compared to prices in India, drugs are very costly in countries which have adopted product patents. Here is a price comparison of some important drugs (in Rs [rupees]).

| Drug | India | Pakistan | USA | UK |
|-----------------|-------|----------|--------|--------|
| Amoxycillin 6s | 16.14 | 21.00 | 39.03 | 53.70 |
| Doxycycline 10s | 18.70 | 20.25 | 21.01 | 125.82 |
| Ibuprofen 10s | 3.43 | 8.80 | 20.20 | 16.49 |
| Piroxicam 10s | 2.88 | 37.50 | 149.20 | 40.55 |
| Cimetidine 10s | 17.34 | 65.00 | 153.04 | 79.74 |
| Ranitidine 10s | 26.16 | 210.00 | 348.70 | 234.07 |
| Nifedipine 10s | 3.88 | 38.50 | 60.38 | 31.20 |
| Diltiazem 10s | 12.00 | 26.73 | 37.73 | 22.27 |

Before the enforcement of the Patents Act in 1970, the cost of medicines in India was the highest in the world. It came down because of the "process patent regime and competitive environment," says Keayla. But the argument has some flaws. The prices are expensive in the US because of the health care system. In India, the prices are kept in check by the Drug Price Control Order. The government has further powers under the Drugs Act, Licensing Act and Essential Commodities Act to control the prices. The industry works under an irrational price control system. The return on capital is under two percent which makes it extremely difficult for manufacturers to spend much on research and development. Actually the cost of manufacturing a drug is hardly 20 percent of the drug price. The main expenses are incurred on sales and distribution.

Hoda says that the people who have talked about prices shooting up are confusing the current price level with that of products to be patented. According to him, there is no reason to fear an increase in prices of medicines already in the market. Of new products becoming unaffordable, he says, "our analyses have shown that the availability of a cheaper substitute ensures that the market forces work and the price of the new medicine comes down to a level which is commensurate with the improvement from the previous generation." Admitting that controlling the price of life-saving drugs would be a problem, he says the government is thinking of ways to overcome it.

Anti-Dunkelists are vociferous that former US trade representative, Carla Hills, sought to hide the magnitude of the problem when she asserted that only five percent of the popular drugs are under product patent. The government also seemed to agree with her when it put the figure at 10 to 15 percent. It claims that the figure was arrived at after counting all the molecules that are manufactured.

But O.P Grover, resident director of the Indian Drugs Manufacturers' Association (IDMA) in Delhi, says, "the government finding is based on the drugs identified as essential by the WHO. Those are outdated." According to an IDMA study, based on data provided by the Operation Research Group and the US health department, 46 percent of all major therapeutic groups were found to be under patent. Keayla adds that Hills' observation is only an attempt to put dust in our eyes because the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association of America has claimed that it

loses about Rs 1,200 crore from patented drugs in India. According to Hills' observation, that would only work out to Rs 200 crore. Says Keayla: "If the new patent regime comes, the turnover of the patented drugs will not be less than 70 percent. We will be paying through our nose."

The Indian manufacturers are indeed a frightened lot. "My labs will become idle and my exports will be affected," says Grover. The government, however, believes that there would be no problems. "They will continue to manufacture drugs which they develop, those that pass into public domain and with license from the patentee," says Hoda. Keayla agrees that the units are not going to close down; but they will copy patented products and flood the market with spurious drugs. "There will be a major law and order problem," says he.

In its effort to regain its eminence in world trade, the US is pressuring the developing countries, through the GATT and also Super 301, to toe its line. Says Hoda: "No doubt, there is pressure. But it is of circumstances. It arises from the fact that all other countries have agreed to the Dunkel proposals. We have told the US that a solution can be found in the Uruguay round. But we will not deal with the patents issue separately."

Vasant Chitale, a director of the Association of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India, points out that "India cannot do without the world. Otherwise, we will be like Burma. Drugs do not dominate our economy. So let us accept the Dunkel proposals as a whole. It will eliminate all the political jockeying that is going on."

But Keayla is not enthused: "The US controlled 40 percent of the world trade. It has gone down to 21 percent. That is because countries like India have progressed. They want to curb that. Globalization is a misnomer." It indeed would be, if drugs go beyond the reach of common people.

Papers Report, Comment on Talks With PRC

Delhi Meeting Ends

93AS1108A Madras THE HINDU in English
29 Jun 93 p 1

[Article by K.K. Katyal: "India, China Agree on Border Stability"]

[Text] New Delhi, June 28. Though the expected formal agreement on confidence-building measures did not materialise as a result of the four-day discussions here between top officials of India and China, which concluded today,

the two countries finalised additional steps to ensure peace and stability along their border—like redeployment of forces along the Line of Actual Control [LAC], prior notification of military exercises and prevention of air intrusions. Also it was agreed to open one additional border trade point—at Shipkila Pass.

P.M. [prime minister] to visit China: Apart from considering the nitty-gritty of the arrangements at the border, the two sides discussed the schedule of new high-level exchanges. The Prime Minister, Mr. P.V. Narasimha Rao, will visit China in the first week of September.

This was the sixth meeting of the Joint Working Group [JWG], set up in 1988 during the China visit of the then Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi, to resolve the boundary dispute. The JWG had so far not gone beyond preliminaries on the substantive issue, but made considerable advance in working out steps for peace and stability in the border region. Of late, however, the progress tended to be slow—and this was reflected in the latest discussions.

Not reconciled: Though the JWG meeting, scheduled to end on Saturday, was extended by two days, the perceptions in regard to the precise nature of the LAC (as against the line “generally known to both the sides”) and the related question of relocating posts and reduction in the level of troops could not be reconciled.

The Indian delegation to the JWG was led by the Foreign Secretary, Mr. J.N. Dixit, and the Chinese team was headed by their Vice Foreign Minister, Mr. Tang Jiaxuan. A press release briefly summed up the outcome of the four-day discussions thus:

“The two sides continued their discussions aimed at arriving at a mutually acceptable settlement of the India-China boundary question. They also exchanged views on further measures to ensure peace and tranquillity in areas along the Line of Actual Control between the two countries. They expressed their satisfaction at the manner in which the confidence-building measures agreed upon at the previous meetings of the Joint Working Group were being implemented. They made progress in their discussions on other steps that could be taken by the two countries to enhance mutual confidence and ensure peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control. These measures include prior notification of military exercises, prevention of air intrusions and redeployment of forces along the Line of Actual Control.”

During a detailed exchange of views on all aspects of relations between India and China, “both sides expressed their satisfaction at the steady and perceptible improvement in bilateral ties”, to use the words of the press release. There will now be two border trade points—the one already in operation is at Lipulekh in the middle sector. The modalities for the opening of the new point will be worked out shortly.

Purposive approach: Briefing correspondents later, Mr. Dixit described the discussions as candid, devoid of polemics and marked by a sense of realism on specific details and a shared purposive approach. He was right as neither side hesitated in raising sensitive issues of concern to it. China enquired about New Delhi’s stand on Tibet,

and Indian side reconfirmed its position that it regarded Tibet as an autonomous region of China.

India raised, in the context of regional security the question of Chinese export of arms to Pakistan. China reassured India that the quantity of arms given was small, that it was equally friendly to India and Pakistan, and that the arms supplies were not directed against any third country.

Peace along LAC: Had the Line of Actual Control been accepted? Based on the location of posts, Mr. Dixit explained, the line existed objectively and was generally known to both sides. “It is not wise to add political content to that line,” he told another questioner.

It was agreed to have mutual transparency on the location of posts and reports of activities on the two sides. These measures would further the process of stability and peace along the Line of Actual Control and contribute to “elements of how to tackle differences on the boundary issue.” They would now proceed from the umbrella principles to derivative principles, he said somewhat philosophically. This was to be part of the step-by-step approach beginning with stabilisation of the border.

The two sides addressed a whole range of global issues. As developing countries, subject to the same kind of pressures—political, economic, social and cultural—they found convergence of views and parallelism on issues like human rights and environment and agreed that their delegations consult each other on international fora during discussions on these subjects.

On nuclear non-proliferation, they differed. China as a signatory to the non-proliferation treaty advocated adoption of its philosophy. India, on the other hand, explained its viewpoint—on the discriminatory nature of the treaty.

Slight Progress Noted

93AS1108B Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
1 Jul 93 p 8

[Editorial: “Sino-Indian Routine”]

[Text] The latest round of Sino-Indian talks has ended in New Delhi in much the same way as the five others since July 1989 with the declaration of pious intent. If the Indian foreign secretary, Mr. J.N. Dixit, is still of the view that “each round of talks is better than the previous one,” it is presumably because some progress is made in each succeeding round in removing the minor differences relating to the confidence-building measures which both sides have been taking since the improvement in mutual relations after Rajiv Gandhi’s 1988 visit to China. But there is little doubt that the two countries are still far from reaching any substantial agreement on the border dispute which led to the 1962 war. This inability has persisted even though the broad parameters under which a settlement is possible have long been outlined, involving Chinese acceptance of the Indian position in the eastern sector in return for Indian acceptance of the Chinese claims in the west. But there is obviously considerable reluctance on both sides to approach this issue in a forthright manner, not least because of the psychological burden of the past caused mainly by the bitter conflict, the promises made in the

Indian Parliament and the long years of strained relationship. To this depressing background have been added the continuing complexities of Chinese military aid to Pakistan although China has reiterated, as the U.S. once used to do, that it is not directed against any other country. As may be expected, this issue along with the status of Tibet featured in the Delhi talks, only to evoke standard responses.

It is patent enough that, unless there is a major breakthrough in tackling the crucial border question, the talks will continue in the current desultory fashion, yielding nothing more than platitudes. Not that these are unimportant, given the tense relations of the past and the Sumdorong Chu incident of 1987 which had the potential for provoking a major border clash. In contrast to that period India has been able to withdraw several divisions from the border ever since the talks started and steps such as notifying each other about military exercises and establishing frequent contacts among senior army personnel on both sides were taken. The Delhi talks have ensured that such measures will prolong the current normalcy along the border. According to the foreign secretary, these "additional measures would further the process of stabilising peace." The opening of a new border trading post at Shipkila pass in Himachal Pradesh is also part of this process of normalisation. It is to be hoped that these steps will gradually lead the two countries to grapple meaningfully with the main problem.

PRC Said To Encourage Indian Investment

93AS1133A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
29 Jul 93 p 14

[Text] New Delhi, July 28 (UNI)—China has invited Indian investment through joint ventures in Shanghai Pudong a new area particularly in energy, transportation and export-oriented agricultural and industrial enterprises.

The area bordering East China coast provides special concessions and facilities to foreign investors in the form of lower customs duties and industrial and commercial taxes.

An indication to this effect was given at the meeting between Indian joint business commission delegation and sub-council of China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), in Shanghai yesterday, according to a message received here.

The two sides also agreed to enlarge and balance trade by including new items, a press release said.

The Chinese side felt that more attention should be given to attract foreign investment in India. Better industrial relations, lower customs duty on raw materials and capital goods and reduced corporate tax were needed for attracting investment. The absence of direct air and shipping services and banking facilities, has been some of the constraints, they added.

The leader of the Indian delegation, Mr Govind Hari Singhania, gave an overview of the economic situation in India, particularly liberalization of terms and conditions of foreign investment.

Mr Singhania suggested that Chinese businessmen should explore the possibility of joint ventures in the field of coal washeries, steel, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, computer software, diesel engines, construction material, processed foods, power, and tourism.

The Indian delegation noted that, China could net \$68.5 billion in foreign investment and 84,000 in joint ventures in 1992.

Czech Delegation Interviewed at Sahar Airport

93AS1100A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
1 Jul 93 p 5

[Text] Bombay, June 30 (UNI)—The new Czech republic has justified the June 27 missile attack on Iraq by the United States, to retaliate against an alleged plot to kill the former U.S. president, Mr George Bush.

Ms L. Pilipoua, an official spokesperson for the Czech foreign minister, Mr Josef Zieleniec, told a group of newsmen at the Sahar International Airport here last night that the act of the U.S. Government was essential because it had to defend the country against a violent act.

The economist-turned-foreign minister of the republic arrived here last night on a stopover from Singapore along with a strong 26 member business delegation, on his way to Prague, after winding up the ten-day good will tour of the Asian countries including India.

The other countries visited by the Czech delegation were China, South Korea, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Mr Michal Lobhouix, the chief of the cabinet of the Czech republic's ministry of foreign affairs, sharing the press brief with Ms Pilipoua, said in reply to a question that the Kashmir issue was an internal matter of the government of India. He refused to elaborate further saying "we do not want to comment on this issue."

Ms Pilipoua said it was the first visit of Mr Zieleniec to the Asian countries after the break-up of the erstwhile Czechoslovakia on January 1 this year.

She said India was the first country the foreign minister visited along with the delegation and top-ranking Czech officials, including general director, incharge Asian countries, Mr Popov Ejsil, and general director, looking after the department of the United Nations.

Ms Pilipoua said the partition of Czechoslovakia, with a population of 15 million, was quite peaceful and smooth. Hardly a few hundred people turned as refugees on either side, she said.

While in Delhi, the foreign minister met the President, the Prime Minister and other concerned ministers. In reply to a question, she said the Czech government's tender, with regard to the laying of gas pipeline between Karnal and Bhatinda, came up for discussion. The Czech foreign minister wanted the government of India to take a decision about the project.

Asked if any trade protocol had been signed between India and the Czech republic, Mr Pilipoua replied in the negative. However, she informed that the main purpose was to introduce the Czech business community to their Indian

counterparts. Economy was transforming itself in the new environs of the Czech republic, on liberal lines, she said.

Mr Michal said they wanted to establish future links with the European countries and were eager to become a member of the European Common Market (ECM). However, Hungary had been opposing the entry of both Czech and Slovak into the ECM—a move they (Czech and Slovak) would oppose.

About the response in other Asian countries, he said the tour was quite successful and they were treated nicely. Asked whether they had signed any joint venture in any Asian country, Ms Pilipoua said some of the accompanying businessmen had signed contracts with their counterparts in China and South Korea. They were interested in information network, he added.

In reply to another question, Ms Pilipoua said unemployment in Czech was just 3.5 percent, with almost zero percent illiteracy and added that the inflation rate ranged between seven to eight percent.

Asked about her republic's relationship with independent nations of the erstwhile Soviet Union, she said Czech wanted to have diplomatic relations with all of them.

Meeting With Uzbeks Ends, Pacts Signed

93AS1128A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
30 Jul 93 p 17

[Article: "India, Uzbekistan Sign 5 Pacts"]

[Text] New Delhi, July 29 (PTI). India and Uzbekistan today signed five agreements aimed at increasing bilateral trade, utilisation of Indian credits, setting up of joint ventures, air services, banking and tourism and telecommunication links.

During the three-day joint commission meeting, the two sides also considered a proposal for setting up an Indo-Uzbek technological center for promoting co-operation in science and technology.

The visiting Uzbek deputy prime minister, Mr T. M. Miryakubov, apprised the President, Dr S. D. Sharma, and the Prime Minister, Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, of the progress made at the joint commission meeting during his calls on them.

The Indian side said it was looking forward to the Uzbek President, Mr I. Karimov's visit to New Delhi later this year.

The external affairs minister, Mr Dinesh Singh, co-chairman of the joint commission, was assisted by the civil aviation minister, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, the minister of state for external affairs, Mr Salman Khursheed, and the minister of state for science and technology, Mr P. R. Kumaramangalam.

TOINS [Times of India News Service] adds: The tourism agreement was signed by Mr T. R. Miryakubov and Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad.

A spokesman of the ministry of civil aviation and tourism said that the two countries agreed to exchange expertise and publicise investment incentives available in the tourism sector.

The agreement will remain valid for five years with a clause for automatic renewal for another term of five years.

The spokesman said that it was agreed that the two countries could explore possibilities of cooperation in building, establishing and managing hotels and other tourism related establishment. A joint committee comprising representatives of the tourism industry from both the countries will review the progress from time to time. Officials of the tourism ministries will also be on the joint committee.

UNI adds: Another agreement signed was for avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion of taxes on income and capital.

The agreement will come into effect in India from April next year, while in Uzbekistan it will be effective from January 1 after the completion of procedural formalities.

The agreement provides for reduced rate of taxation in specified areas which will encourage mutual flow of investment and technology between the two countries.

It has provision for solving the problems of the taxpayer in the other country through mutual agreement.

The agreement also provides for exchange of information between the tax authorities of the two countries for prevention of fraud or evasion of taxes covered by the treaty.

Israeli Ambassador Names Possible Agreements

93AS1131A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
24 Jul 93 p 17

[Text] New Delhi, July 23 (PTI)—India and Israel are all set to sign several agreements in areas like civil aviation, tourism, avoidance of double taxation, sharing of technology and scientific cooperation.

This was indicated by the Israeli Ambassador, Mr Ephraim Doweck, here yesterday while speaking on "prospect of Indo-Israeli commercial relations" at a meeting organized by the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM).

He said, "Indian and Israeli teams are working on these agreements which are most likely to be signed by the end of this year."

Referring to the treaty on avoidance of double taxation, Mr Doweck said this treaty was considered to be "important," as it would further boost Indo-Israeli trade to "new heights". Officials of Indian finance ministry would be visiting Tel Aviv in September to give final shape to the draft treaty which would be signed "most probably in Delhi by the end of this year."

Mr Doweck said both India and Israel were also closely working towards signing of a treaty on according each other the Most Favored Nation (MFN) status.

"This is almost ready and is likely to be signed before the end of this year," he said, adding it would go a long way in diversifying India's export through Israel.

Referring to the massive potential for economic cooperation between the two countries, Mr Dowek said "Israel looks at India not as a supplier of raw materials. We consider India as a super economic power and we stand to gain by expanding our economic ties with it."

Talking about the scope for joint ventures between Indian and Israeli firms in a wide range of industries, he said: "Many projects are in the pipeline and a number of joint venture projects which include textiles and pharmaceuticals, have been decided to be set up in Israel."

He suggested India and Israel could work towards setting up export-oriented joint ventures for Third World countries. In this context, he said India could export its products through Israel to the United States, European Community countries and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries with whom Israel enjoys special trade relations.

Inviting Indian entrepreneurs to set up industries in Israel, he said Indian businessmen could set up fully owned units with 100 percent equity in Israel and enjoy tax concessions as well as financial assistance.

He said Israel would provide 38 percent of the total project cost as an incentive to woo direct foreign investment.

He suggested that Indian and Israeli firms could explore possibilities of collaboration in areas like agriculture, food processing industries, irrigation, wasteland development, medical equipment, telecommunication, electrical appliances and a wide range of consumer items.

Speaking at a meeting later, the ASSOCHAM President Dr N.M. Dhuldhoya, said with the growing of commercial ties between India and Israel, there is now increasing scope for substantially diversifying trade basket.

Referring to scope for joint ventures, he said it was encouraging to note that some initiatives for such joint projects were already under way in fields such as irrigation equipment, solar power plants, textiles and garments and agrochemicals.

Indo-Iranian Relations 'Rooted in History'

93AS1118F Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
23 Jul 93 p 10

[Article by Zaheer M. Quraishi]

[Text] In the wake of the Iranian announcement that it does not support Kashmiri militancy and intends to strengthen its ties with India, it was appropriate for the President, Dr Shankar Dayal Sharma, to break his journey to Ukraine at Teheran for an exchange of views with the Iranian President. Studies of relations between any two countries tend to degenerate into exercises in mutual flattery. But the Indo-Iranian ties deserve a more serious and careful consideration than is normally accorded to them in diplomatic niceties and cultural exchanges.

The relations between any two countries can be conceived of at three levels: cultural exchange, commonality of

interests and complementarity. There are few countries and regions with which India shares such a profound, rich and protracted association as it does with Iran. It is an historical saga that binds the two people together. Whatever may be the original home of the Aryans, the two countries are inhabited by people who are predominantly Aryan. The Persian language belongs to the Sanskrit family and the imprint of Aryan culture on Iran is pronounced.

Even in the medieval period, the characteristic unity of India and Iran remained intact. The expansion of Islam, which began as a process of Arabization of Syrians, Hamites, Berber and many other non-Arabs, had to confine itself to Islamization when it confronted the Persian people. Many Persian scholars adopted Arabic as the language of intellectual expression, but they kept their feet firmly grounded in the Persian culture symbolized by its language and literature.

Conversion Continued

The process of conversion of Iran to Islam continued in India, but here it did not proceed beyond the urban conglomerations, although it forcefully combined with the process of acculturation. This gave rise to what we call a composite culture in India. As a matter of fact, this cultural configuration of northern India is an extension of Indo-Iranian culture with a strong imprint of Persian language and literature. Most of the intrusions in India in ancient and medieval periods came through the region which can be culturally defined as Indo-Iranica.

In the saga of history, India and Iran participated in a joint historical process, comprising many cross-currents of demography and empires. It came to share a civilizational perspective which guided the nationalist resurgence in the two countries. If the two countries did not act as a single unit in modern times, the reason resides in the European scramble for colonies rather than in any indigenous urge for segmentation of the cultural zone.

That there is a strong community of interests in the region dawned on the leaders of the two countries during the nationalist renaissance. India was fortunate in having twin leadership of Gandhi and Nehru. The former planted Indian nationalism on firm plebeian foundations, whereas the latter linked it to a global perspective. From Gandhi came a design of a modern state within the framework of traditions which had a universal impact on nationalist movements in a large part of Afro-Asia, including India and Iran. Nehru, on the other hand, linked nationalist movements everywhere into a global upsurge.

Hiding Enemy

The nationalist movement in Iran was directed against an alien enemy who was hiding behind the *ancien regime*. The discovery of huge oil reserves in Iran and the world's growing dependence on it as a source of energy had reinforced the alliance between the oil cartels and the monarchy in Iran, providing the North an excuse to intervene in the internal politics of the Iranian people. There was no nationalist leadership which survived for a long time in view of the capacity of the Shah to mobilize

the conservative circles in curbing the freedom movement and physically exterminating its leaders. Even an abdication of the king was rescinded with the help of the conservative army.

The nationalist upsurge in Iran from Dr Mossadegh all the way to Ayatollah Khomeini was supported by India for it aspired to control the political destiny of the country. It is a noteworthy fact that the government of India had established contacts with Imam Khomeini in Paris quite some time before the Iranian revolution actually took place.

Insofar as the complementarity of interests is concerned, there was a great deal of exchange of goods and services between India and Iran. As a middle-range industrial country India offered relevant technical know-how, both manual and material, which Iran required. Again, as a repository of technical, skilled and unskilled manpower, India provided personnel as engineers, teachers, doctors, technicians and laborers whenever Iran sought them. There were several items which Iran sought to purchase from Indian producers.

Iran is one of those countries which has rich oil deposits. Though India has made some significant headway in exploring oil, the needs of its continually growing population cannot be met by indigenous resources alone. It has to import oil; Iran is one of its main suppliers. The list of Indo-Iranian trade is extensive and available in many books and reports.

Ideological Stance

The Indian political system articulates an ideological stance which is defined as secularism, which sets out a program of equal promotion of all religions in a spirit of tolerance and, hence, does not undermine any religious group, its rites and practices. The religious configuration of Iran is different. Whereas there are several religions of indigenous and foreign origin in India, Iran was a hotbed of sectarian debates on Islam. Therefore, the kind of pluralism we witness in India is not found in Iran. But intense theological controversies had existed in Iran ever since the advent of Islam. In a spirit of tolerance the Islamic republic of Iran has put an end to many theological controversies between Shias and Sunnis so as to form a pluralist state, committed nevertheless to piety.

Both the non-violent revolutions in India and Iran aimed at the abolition of vestiges of the *ancien regime* to pave the way for modern territorial states so that Asia might develop, raise its head with dignity and self-respect and play its due role in shaping the new international order. It is absolutely essential for India and Iran to cooperate in building up the new world.

Indo-Iranian relations hold out an example of two neighboring states with an historical partnership in civilization and a long record of political and economic cooperation, demonstrating that the destiny of the Islamic Muslim world is inextricably linked to that of the entire Orient/South conglomeration. The post-cold war periods warrants that the countries of the region sort out their squabbles so that the Concert of the North/West may not find an excuse to restore the era of Vasco da Gama.

Regional Affairs

Bangladesh Said To Admit to 'Massive Migration' Across Border

93AS1071G New Delhi ORGANISER in English
25 Jul 93 p 8

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] If Ayodhya is the all-India poll plank of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], in West Bengal its trump card seems to be illegal infiltration. This was decisively proved both in the 1991 general elections and also in the recent gram panchayat poll; while in 1988 the BJP could muster a mere 0.001 percent of the total votes cast, in 1991 it scored an astounding 12 percent. The panchayat elections have further confirmed that the BJP has consolidated its position in that State. Even "secular" newspapers have now accepted BJP as the "third force" in West Bengal.

For long has the BJP waged a lone battle against the demographic invasion through the eastern States although Bangladesh stubbornly refuses to concede that its citizens have illegally crossed over and established ghettos in various parts of India. However, a significant study by Ms Sharifa Begum of the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, Dhaka is being interpreted as the *first semi-official acknowledgement* of this development.

According to the study, between 1951 and 1961 about 3.15 to 3.50 million people migrated from East Pakistan to India. Between 1961 and 1974, another 1.5 million crossed the border and settled in India. The study also incorporates estimates of deaths in the 1970 cyclone and in the 1971 war.

Obviously this is a conservative estimate. Sanjoy Hazarika (THE TELEGRAPH, 27-5-93) puts the figure somewhere between 12 and 17 million. His estimate is based on personal investigation and official records. Sometime back, Hazarika was commissioned by THE NEW YORK TIMES to study the problem of illegal infiltration. Not only did he visit Bangladesh regularly he also had access to official documents of that country.

Significantly, the former BJP President, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, has also made a similar observation. At a seminar in the Capital's Deendayal Research Institute in February last, Dr Joshi asserted that there are about 17.5 million Bangladeshi infiltrators in India.

Hazarika points out that Ms Sharifa's study fails to take into account the 10 million who fled the repression of the Pakistani army in 1970-71. After the 1971 war, most of the migrants returned but nearly a million stayed behind. All this adds up to an outflow of six million during the 23 years from 1951 and 1974.

Statistics for migration after 1974, states Sharifa Begum, are not available. But that is no valid reason to suggest that migration has ceased. There are indications, she adds, that Bangladesh lost a substantial proportion of its population between 1974 and 1981 due to migration and famine. Another South-Asian scholar Marcus Franda suggests that the rate of migration actually increased in the seventies.

"A fine example of what havoc migration can cause is provided by Assam", says Hazarika. Based on the 1951 growth rate, Assam should have a population of about 15 million. But according to the latest census, it is more than 22 million (actually 22.3 million to be precise). How does one account for the extra seven million? That is the 'contribution' of the illegal migrants and their descendants argues Hazarika.

The Border Security Force claims to have detained in 1990 more than 56,000 Bangladeshis surreptitiously trying to enter West Bengal. Along the Assam and Tripura border, detentions and deportations were only in hundreds.

The rule of the thumb, says an Indian diplomat, is that for every illegal immigrant caught, at least four get through. But Shri T.V. Rajeshwar—a former governor of West Bengal and a former chief of the Intelligence Bureau—disagrees. He is on record to have stated that not more than 20 percent of the total in-flow of illegal migrants has been curtailed. The West Bengal Government claims that between 1972 and 1988 about 2.8 million Bangladeshi nationals entered the State. Going by Rajeshwar's projections, if one migrant is held for every five who get through, the number of infiltrators in West Bengal alone during this period would be about 14 million!

However, even Rajeshwar's assessment is an understatement. Knowledgeable sources assert that hardly 10 percent of the total illegal migrants are actually apprehended. It may be recalled that in 1992, a conference held in Bangladesh on the country's demographic situation admitted that the whereabouts of about 1.2 crore of its population were not known.

Sanjoy Hazarika does not provide community-wise break-up of the total migrants in India. The Sangh Parivar has consistently held that Muslim migrants are to be classified as illegal infiltrators whereas non-Muslim migrants are to be treated as refugees. Does Hazarika subscribe to this view? It is not clear.

Nevertheless, it is apparent that the menace of demographic invasion is indeed of horrendous proportions. Never mind if GOI says otherwise.

Internal Affairs

Rao Speaks Before No-Confidence Vote

93AS1134A Hyderabad DECCAN CHRONICLE
in English 29 Jul 93 p 9

[Text] New Delhi, July 28: The Prime Minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao, on Wednesday strongly defended the new economic policies and reiterated his plea to the people and politicians, irrespective of their party affiliations, to concentrate on development of the country.

Intervening in a three-day discussion on the opposition-sponsored no-confidence motion in the Lok Sabha, Mr Narasimha Rao laid stress on delinking religion from politics and assured the members that the government would introduce in the current Parliament session Constitution amendments to curb the use of religion for electoral purposes.

"Religion cannot be the trump card of any party", he stated and added that those who were habituated to use religion for political purposes should come out of it. "We have to go back to secular polity".

In his speech, the Prime Minister avoided any reference to the stock broker Harshad Mehta's allegation of Rs[rupee] crore pay-off and the securities scam—the matters which were before the Joint Parliamentary Committee. He also did not touch upon the Bofors kickbacks scandal and the issue of corruption in high places. This resulted in indignation and uproar from the opposition benches as these three issues were their main plank during the three days of debate on the no-confidence motion.

Speaking in a confident and firm tone, Mr Narasimha Rao said that the mover of the motion, Mr Ajoy Mukhopadhyay, had repeated what the Left parties have been stating during the last two years. He had a dig at the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] when he said the Left parties' rhetorics on liberalization changed from State to State. (Obviously he was referring to CPI-M government in West Bengal, which was also following liberalization and other economic policies of the Center and which was accepting huge amounts from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank for their projects).

The Prime Minister asserted that liberalization had become necessary as the country had to catch up with the global situation. He said that the government had seen to it that the ill-effects of liberalization was effectively forestalled. Everyone thought that with the implementation of the policy, lakhs of employees would become jobless. This was not allowed to happen as it involved a human problem. The government took every possible step to stop this process.

Pointing out that Rs 30,000 crore was earmarked for rural development programs, he said this was the first shield against unemployment and urbanization.

On the Ayodhya issue, Mr Narasimha Rao said that two trusts would be formed, one for construction of the temple and the other for building the mosque. Politicians would not be involved in the two trusts, he said and sought suggestions from the members in the matter.

The Prime Minister also stated that the government was contemplating bringing comprehensive electoral reforms. Measures to discourage non-serious candidates from entering the fray, State funding of candidates, prohibition of a candidate from contesting from more than one place, ban on donations to political parties and other matters would be covered in the proposed legislation. He said he would have discussions with opposition party leaders on the Bill.

Ombudsman

Mr Narasimha Rao also announced that the government was examining a proposal to have an ombudsman to go into corruption cases against men in high offices. He said he had received reports on the functioning of this set-up in various countries and he would have consultations with political parties in the matter.

Cautioning the members that mixing religion with politics would be "disastrous" for the country, the Prime Minister appealed to all sections of the people to look at the proposal in the right spirit.

The parties which are addicted to using religion for making political gains may not like it. "But what I am saying is not only for the good of the country but also for the parties concerned."

He quoted a Supreme Court judgment in this connection and said that the democratic election process could not be allowed to be vitiated.

The political life of the country would have to be cleaned. The aberration that had taken place in the political life with the misuse of religion "must be removed lock, stock and barrel," he said.

Mr Rao also announced the government's decision to go ahead with much more seriousness with electoral reforms in consultation with all major political parties.

Measures prohibiting non-serious candidates from contesting elections, State funding of elections, restrictions on persons contesting more than one constituency and regulations on donations were among the reforms under consideration, Mr Rao said.

Briefly touching on the Ayodhya issue, the Prime Minister said the government had already chosen some names for the proposed trusts which would undertake construction of a temple and a mosque in the area. This was not the final list and he would invite suggestions from members on the composition of the trusts.

During his speech, the Prime Minister covered a wide area indicating the direction in which it wanted to go on the economic front and the measures being taken to look after the interests of the vulnerable sections of the people.

The Prime Minister said that when the government launched the liberalization process it was said that the policy would lead to total unemployment like it had happened elsewhere in some countries.

But the care taken by the government in pursuing the policy had not allowed this to happen.

He said the cry against the policy of economic liberalization had been raised by the CPM, who had been saying the same things on the subject for a number of years. In moving the present motion, the CPM member had nothing to add to that. It was another matter when it came to actual practice. "They are a very practical lot", the Prime Minister said with irony apparently having a dig at the policies pursued by the Left Front government in West Bengal.

The Prime Minister said that a rapid process of liberalization was necessary because it could not be effected in degrees to link the country's economy to the world economy. He said the results had been encouraging and referred to the decline in inflation rate from 17 percent in 1990 to 5.4 percent in 1993.

The Prime Minister said the plan outlay had been considerably steeped in health, education and agriculture sectors to ensure optimum employment.

Mr Rao said while industrialization took place, it should be at the micro-level so that the common people would be the direct beneficiaries.

The government feels that the money should be spent straight instead of trickling down from the top. "It should be a model which needed to be understood by everybody," he added.

The Prime Minister said the country had achieved a record production of foodgrains this year. How did it happen? If the farmers were not galvanized, it would not have been possible, he said.

The procurement prices had been increased and farmers were getting Rs 310 per quintal for paddy this year compared to Rs 185 they got in 1989.

He said the rate of inflation had been brought down from 17 percent in 1991 to a mere 5.4 percent today.

In other countries, such a rate of inflation was "unimaginable," he said.

The Prime Minister said the farmers could remain assured that there were enough fertilizers and seeds in the country to meet their requirements. There had been a substantial increase in the production of oilseeds.

While increasing the output of oilseeds, it must be seen that there was no fall in production of foodgrains. Besides providing fertilizers through subsidies, the government was also committed to building infrastructure for the farmers.

Schemes

These included construction of roads and markets. The new agriculture policy being implemented by the government was completely different from that being pursued some years ago. The anxiety experienced by farmers in 1990-91 was now over, Mr Rao said.

The Prime Minister said the handloom weavers, "starving for decades", were being brought under the rural development schemes like Intensive Rural Development (IRDP), Jawahar Rozagar Yojana (RJI) and Indira Awas Yajana as part of the "linkage between rural development and textiles ministries".

Mr Rao said a high-level committee under his chairmanship would analyze the problems of khadi and village industries and come up with a scheme in three months to rehabilitate them.

Mr Rao said there was no need to be worried over the cryogenic engine deal with Russia. "As many engines as we want will be available to us from Russia."

He said a high level Russian delegation was expected here soon to hold discussions in this regard.

On India's role in the United Nations peace-keeping operations, the Prime Minister said India had taken part in almost all peace-keeping operations.

The Prime Minister said all his government's efforts, including liberalization, were aimed at giving the country a quantum jump in development but some political parties did not want it and were creating hurdles in its path.

He said time and again he had pleaded with the opposition parties not to take up any agitational program for at least three to five years and that if they heeded the call the country would progress in all respects. But very often it had been noticed that the country sank back to its position due to non-cooperation from the opposition parties.

The Prime Minister said the government intended to bring forward an amendment in the Representation of Peoples Act prohibiting parties from mixing religion with politics.

"Religion cannot be a trump card for any party in the future," he said.

Mr Rao made it clear that the measure was not meant for or against any particular community but was aimed at bringing the country's ethos back to what it was.

The Prime Minister said people had become an addict to using religion for political purposes. "I am saying this for the good of the parties and the country," he said.

He said to remove this malaise, the government had thought of brining the legislative measures.

He quoted from a recent Supreme Court judgment to stress the need for establishing a rational electoral process by removing the practice of arousal of irrational passions.

The Prime Minister said the Law Ministry was engaged in giving a final shape to the separate trusts announced for construction of the temple and mosque at Ayodhya and invited suggestions for nomination of the members. He added that the Central Bureau of Investigation probe inquiry into the Babri mosque demolition was progressing well.

Mr Rao pledged that the government would resume the electoral reforms left out at the 1990 level and bring forward a "comprehensive package". He identified some of these measures as: discouraging non-serious candidates, introduction of identity cards for voters, election funding, disqualification of the corrupt and guilty, ban on donations by companies and separate secretariate for the Election Commission.

Mr Rao announced the government's intention to appoint an "ombudsman" in the country. "We have to see whether the office of the ombudsman should be established by an Act of Parliament.

The government was looking into the suggestions in the Lok Pal Bill introduced in 1989, the Prime Minister said.

'Corrupt Practices' Seen Behind No-Confidence Victory

93LA0190C Bombay THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 13 Aug 93 pp 8-10

[Article by Shekhar Iyer: "Horse Trading"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] It was a smile seldom seen on his face and one that was definitely missing for over a week. But there it was, on the prime minister's face, as he made his way out of Parliament soon after the verdict on the opposition's no-confidence motion to unseat him on July 28.

But the smile soon vanished when a group of journalists and television cameramen cornered him for a few words on his 'victory'. Rao merely folded his hands in response.

The prime minister did not wish to comment on the miraculous, razor-thin majority that saved his government. Was it because, while his government had won, the cause of morality in public life had suffered a crushing blow? The prime minister, as well as his managers who had engineered the last-minute moves to save the government at the Center, had to stoop to such ignoble means to stay in power. Further, the manner in which the ruling party went about it, could not inspire confidence in either the party or its leader—ever again.

If democracy was a game of numbers, the prime minister had not even managed a convincing win. He may have managed to survive by 14 votes, but that crucial win had robbed both him and his party of all political credibility.

It was for the first time that a Congress government, top downwards, was involved in the blatant attempts at horse-trading and indulging in pressure-tactics to split the votes in order to survive.

The engineered survival by 14 votes was also the narrowest margin managed by the government, in the three no-confidence motions moved against it in a little over two years.

It was clear that at least 11 of these votes were obtained by inducing a split in the Janata Dal (Ajit Singh), and by succumbing to the blackmail of the Jharkhand MPs [members of Parliament] who provided the other four.

When the voting was complete and the verdict declared, the MPs were openly talking about the large amounts of money that was supposed to have changed hands in order to win over Ram Lakhan Singh Yadav and six other MPs who defied Ajit Singh to come to Rao's rescue.

The irony of it all was that a government which was sought to be thrown out on charges of corruption, had succeeded in staying on by employing that very skill.

What was particularly striking was that despite the gravity of the charges levelled against the prime minister in the wake of the Harshad Mehta disclosures, Rao made no attempt whatsoever to answer them. He did not offer a word about the scam.

Rather, in his reply to the debate in Parliament before the crucial voting, he even said that this motion was no different from all the other motions tabled against his government in the past. Not only was this astonishing statement at variance with the general perception, but implicit in his utterances was a refusal on his part to admit that this time the Opposition's ire was directed not so much at his party, as himself.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Left—the twin extremes of the Indian polity—found it necessary to come together not so much to oust the Congress from power as to drive home their specific critique of Rao's leadership.

If the support of the break-away faction of the Janata Dal (Ajit) had been obtained by nefarious deals, the support of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha smacked of a ruling party succumbing to blackmail.

This was clearly seen by the manner in which the prime minister gave in to the Jharkhand MPs whose representative, Suraj Mandal, in a short speech, declared that his party would support Rao if he said something "positive" about their demand for a separate Jharkhand state. True, Rao did not make an announcement about a separate state, but he did make some placatory sounds, saying he was committed to resolving the issue. The support of this group was clearly obtained with the promise of a Jharkhand council of wider powers than were envisaged in the Bihar government's bill on the subject.

Now, with the loss of moral authority to govern, and the pretensions of principled politics having been ripped off, the government as well as the prime minister face an uncertain future—to say the least.

As Rao realized on the day of the voting, some ruling party MPs had actually got together to call for a meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party (CPP), to raise the leadership issue. A group of these MPs even decided to consider a 'suicide mission' and were toying with the idea of remaining absent during the crucial voting on the no-trust motion. It is another matter that the plan was nipped in the bud by Rao-loyalists like Kerala Chief Minister K. Karunakaran. But the fact remains that it was for the first time that MPs owing allegiance to Rao's *bete noire*, Human Resources Development Minister Arjun Singh, had dared to defy the party leadership so openly.

This 'suicide squad' which had planned to feign illness and remain absent during the voting, consisted of 12 Congress MPs including R. Prabhu, Chinta Mohan, Jagmeet Singh Brar, Y. S. Rajashekhare Reddy, Aslam Sher Khan, Dilip Singh Bhuria, Shailendra Bahadur Singh and Shiv Charan Mathur. They gave up their plan only after they were convinced that the government had indeed managed to save itself by striking a deal with the break-away Ajit Singh group and the Jharkhand MPs.

This shows that the sentiment favoring a change in leader is expected to gather momentum in the near future.

Already, Arjun Singh has thrown in the gauntlet by writing to the prime minister, demanding that any decision on admitting the seven Janata Dal (A) MPs into the Congress should be taken only after a discussion in the party's highest policy-making body—the working committee.

Arjun Singh's worry is two-fold: An induction of the JD(A) [Janata Dal] MPs into the party would directly strengthen Rao's hands and any move by him to cause a split by taking away some MPs would become extremely risky, since he would be required to increase the number of MPs on his side to circumvent the anti-defection law.

The moves launched by Parliamentary Affairs Minister V. C. Shukla, and others with the blessings of Rao, to induce even other groups in Parliament to join hands with the Congress, have unnerved those opposed to the prime minister within the party. They see, in these moves, a larger design to keep Rao firmly in the saddle and at the

same time boost the party's strength in Parliament, so that it is no longer a minority government.

The victory in Parliament has, of course, given rise to fresh hope among the Congress MPs, who are still undecided on withdrawing support from Rao. They believe that the PM would, at this juncture, take steps to revamp his government by inducting new faces and galvanizing the party machinery, by filling up vacant posts in the AICC-I [All India Congress Committee] set-up as well as in the working committee, and constitute the party parliamentary board.

But there is no indication from Rao's side that he intends to do anything immediately—either to reshuffle his cabinet or make changes within the party. If caution has paid off till now, why should he change tracks? asks a Rao aide.

The prime minister's first priority since winning the no-trust move has been to please the groups of MPs who helped him survive the opposition onslaught. First, he despatched Home Minister S. B. Chavan to Calcutta, bowing to the wishes of young MPs like Mamata Bannerjee who want to launch a mass agitation against the Jyoti Basu government.

Chavan's visit was to press for the state Congress-I's demand for a judicial probe into the police firings in July which claimed 12 lives, and to send signals to the Left that the prime minister would not forgive it for joining hands with the BJP and those inside the ruling party working for a change in the leadership.

Rao was particularly annoyed by Chief Minister Jyoti Basu's statement revealing that the prime minister was so desperate to save his position that he had even telephoned Basu, asking him to come to Delhi to persuade the MPs from the Left from unseating his government.

It is no secret that the Left did convey the message to those opposed to Rao's leadership in the Congress that it was time for them to take the initiative for a change, since Rao was a liability both inside Parliament and outside.

The Left leaders had even suggested certain names as successors to Rao, after Harshad Mehta's allegations of political pay-offs affected the government's image in the public eye.

The Left, which would not be averse to a tie-up with the Congress to take on the BJP, would definitely like a change for any meaningful fight on an anti-communal plank.

This demand for a refurbished image of the government and the party is likely to gain momentum even within the party, once the assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh are announced.

None of the North-based leaders thinks that the party is safe if it tries to face the hustings with Rao in command. This also explains rumors that a serious bid is very likely to be made soon, to project Arjun Singh as the next prime minister.

Interestingly, an opinion poll of the ruling party MPs did indicate that Arjun Singh is now considered the second-best man for the prime ministership. Maharashtra Chief

Minister Sharad Powar is only a poor third, according to the poll conducted by the HTV video-magazine, *Eyewitness*.

Except for the dwindling number of Rao supporters who think that the prime minister is out of the trough and his stars are on the ascendant again, many think it is only a question of time before he bows out.

As if in preparation for such a change, two stalwarts, Arjun Singh and Sharad Pawar, are sharpening their knives.

What is the attitude of the Opposition parties?

While the Left is willing to wait for the changes to take place in the ruling party, the BJP is only thankful that it now has more time to plan for the Armageddon.

On the other hand, the centrist groups including V. P. Singh's Dal, Chandra Shekhar's tiny group as well as Ajit Singh who has been left badly bruised by the split engineered by the Congress, are finding that they have to come together to be able to make any impact in the assembly polls, particularly in Uttar Pradesh.

Broadly speaking, however, the politics of defection which wreaked havoc in the states, threatens to dominate the center now.

The anti-defection law enacted by the Rajiv Gandhi government has proved to be counter-productive as it has been used to provide legal cover to unprincipled floor crossings.

The scenario is awesome when one hears of the poll surveys that predict that in the event of a mid-term election, the result would be a hung Parliament, with the Lok Sabha seats divided three ways between the Congress, the BJP, the Left Front and the National Front.

The arithmetic of 1991 appears still valid for 1993, and the political scene inside Parliament today is no different from what it could be outside, in the event of polls.

The Opposition realizes that no-trust moves in Parliament, whether well-conceived or not, do not help resolve any issues. For some time to come, they have to be content with the extended lease of life for Rao and his government.

Congress Said Using Hook and Crook Against Jayalalitha

93AS1093F Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
2 Aug 93 p 4

[Article by G. C. Shekhar: "Congress Exploring Means To Oust Jayalalitha"]

[Text]

Party Seeking Help of Governor, Poll Panel Chief

Madras, Aug. 1: Seething with anger over the AIADMK's [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] decision to vote against the Narasimha Rao government during the non-confidence motion, the Congress is exploring all avenues to topple the Jayalalitha government.

Since the major issue of corruption, which could be Ms Jayalalitha's Achilles' heel, finds the Congress itself on the

defensive after the Harshad Mehta disclosures, the party hopes to use two constitutional authorities against the AIADMK government.

While the office of the chief election commissioner, Mr T. N. Seshan, is already embroiled in a legal battle with Ms Jayalalitha over her disqualification from the state Assembly, the Governor Dr Channa Reddy, is fast assuming a more activist role that is causing sleepless nights to Ms Jayalalitha.

The first "unconnected" response to the AIADMK's decision to vote against the Rao government came from the chief election commission. Mr Seshan requisitioned Central forces from Delhi for election duty in two constituencies of Palani and Ranipet which are going to hold byelections on August 19. The state government saw this as a direct challenge to its authority and protested against this especially when there was no break-down of law and order in the state.

In reality, the Election Commission appears to be fighting a proxy war against the AIADMK government, since the deployment of Central forces could become a prestige battle between the commission and the state, leading to the postponement of the byelections.

The Congress is in no position to win these elections especially after Ms Jayalalitha's protest fast over the Cauvery issue and further postponement could only benefit the Congress. Whereas Ms Jayalalitha and the DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] chief, Mr Karunanidhi, have already announced their tour programme in the two constituencies, the Congress appears to be in no hurry, thus betraying its confidence that the elections would not be held this time too.

The AIADMK, however, is more worried about the sudden spurt of activity in the state of Dr Channa Reddy. There was considerable mirth in the AIADMK circles after Dr Reddy struck a friendly posture towards Ms Jayalalitha after a dinner hosted by her. He even appeared to put a spoke into the second set of disqualification petitions presented against Ms Jayalalitha by Dr Subramanian Swamy.

But all this changed when Ms Jayalalitha, without consulting the Governor, embarked on her fast unto death over the Cauvery issue and even refused to accept his mediation.

Dr Reddy was so cut up with Ms Jayalalitha's "immature politics," that he forwarded Dr Swamy's petitions to the Election Commission, climbing down from his earlier stand that he would seek legal opinion on the matter. This sent alarm bells ringing in the AIADMK, forcing Ms Jayalalitha to approach the High Court once more and procure an eagerly delivered injunction.

The Governor also sent a highly negative report on how law and order was mishandled by the state government after Ms Jayalalitha's fast. It was his intervention that put an end to ruling party-sponsored violence. Dr Reddy was also the first to welcome the defeat of the non-confidence motion against the Rao government thereby implying that he frowned upon Ms Jayalalitha's decision to vote in favour of the motion.

Early this week the Governor participated in a Congress(I) function where he did not mince words about what he thought of Ms Jayalalitha's style of functioning. Indirectly referring to the way the state Assembly had been hijacked consistently by the AIADMK, Dr Reddy observed at the meeting that there was no point in convening the Assembly if it was to pass the Budget using the brute majority of the ruling party. The Assembly was a forum to listen to opposite views, he pointed out.

The Governor also indirectly commented that Ms Jayalalitha lacked a national stature unlike many of her predecessors. He also surmised that the people of the state saw him as someone who had come to protect them. These remarks have obviously caused considerable anxiety within the AIADMK.

Sharma Addresses at Banquet in Ankara

93AS1121A Madras *THE HINDU* in English 17 Jul 93 p 9

[Article: "S.D. Sharma Decries Religious Extremism"]

[Text] Ankara, July 16. The President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, today decried the forces of religious extremism, bigotry and sub-nationalism emerging in the pot-cold war era and aid nations must work together to face the new challenges confronting the world.

Speaking at a banquet hosted by the Turkish President, Mr. Suleyman Demirel, Dr. Sharma, who arrived here today on the second leg of his four-nation tour, noted that momentous changes in the world following the end of the cold war had not made the world free of conflict. The Gulf war, the continuing strife in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Nagorno-Karabakh and Somalia, and the bloodletting in Angola, Afghanistan and Cambodia were grim reminders that the world was not without suffering and tribulation.

On the economic side, the world trading system was in the process of painful transition with the forces of free trade pitted against increasing protectionism.

Simultaneously, Dr. Sharma, said long-deferred global problems, including environmental degradation depletion of resources, terrorism and drug trafficking have demanded greater attention and concerted remedial action.

Stating that India and Turkey must maintain the new momentum of high-level visits to strengthen bilateral cooperation, Dr. Sharma said "We believe that there is tremendous scope for its expansion between our two countries in wide-ranging spheres." He then invited Mr. Demirel to visit India. Noting that India and Turkey were both founded on the principle of secularism and democracy, he said externally-inspired terrorism and violence continued to trouble India. But these had been met "but a reiteration of faith in our deeply-held national values."

Island of stability: In this context, he said India appreciated greatly the condolences offered by Turkey to the victims of terrorism in Bombay and its condemnation of violence and terrorism in all its forms. He described Turkey as an island of stability in an otherwise turbulent area and commended the significant role played by it in the Balkans and the Caucasus. India also followed with interest, he said, the efforts of the Turkish and Greek leaderships to promote a breakthrough in the relations between the two countries. "We wish you success in your quest for peace and friendship."

New era in ties: Earlier, on arrival at the Esenboga airport, Dr. Sharma was received among others by Mr. Demirel and greeted with a 21-gun salute. Welcoming Dr. Sharma, Mr. Demirel said he believed the visit, the first by an Indian President, will mark "a new era in Turkish-Indian relations."

U.N. council expansion: Before his arrival here Dr. Sharma completed a three-day visit to Ukraine. The Ukraine Government has agreed to support India's proposal to expand the Security Council to reflect the increasing membership of the United Nations, an official spokesman said in Odessa.

Sharma Speaks at Budapest Banquet

93AS1126A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English 22 Jul 93 p 13

[Article: "Hungary, India for Closer Ties"]

[Text] Budapest, July 21 (PTI): India and Hungary have sought cooperation worldwide to prevent outbreak of religious and ethnic conflicts and majority nationalism, which endanger the security of the world.

The two countries are partners in the endeavour to evolve an international order based on equality of every nation and individual, a world based on free cooperation of free peoples, the Hungarian President, Mr. Arpad Goncz, said at a banquet he held in honour of the Indian President, Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma.

Dr Sharma referred to the challenges being faced by societies building a better future for themselves and mentioned in this connection a terrorism, both domestic and international, human rights violations, ensuring political freedom and eradicating poverty and disease.

Dr Sharma said India and Hungary share basic human values and had worked together in different forums to meet such challenges.

There was an indirect reference to the situation in Balkans by Mr Goncz during plenary talks yesterday.

Hungary has been concerned about the fate of Hungarian population in neighbouring countries, which have been torn apart by ethnic strife.

Dr Sharma said India was aware of these problems adding, no country had the right to discriminate in ethnic or other matters.

Government Taking Stern Steps To Keep Out Religion

93AS1057B Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
17 Jul 93 p 12

[Article: "Government Plans Stern Steps"]

[Text]

Preventing Use of Religion in Politics

New Delhi—Draconian measures being contemplated by the Government in the name of preventing use of religion in politics are certain to set the Government and the Bharatiya Janata Party on a collision course.

Highly-placed Government sources indicated here on Friday that returning officers are being sought to be empowered to postpone the elections in case allegations about the use of religion are made against a candidate two days before the polling.

An equally serious provision under consideration is to authorise returning officers to cancel nomination of a candidate if a charge is hurled against him one week before the polling. That means the nomination can be cancelled during campaign.

Sources indicated that Law Ministry officials are burning midnight oil to draft the proposed bill to ban the use of religion in politics. It is generally believed that the exercise being carried out at the behest of the ruling party is the outcome of its panic reaction to Bharatiya Janata Party's growing popularity, particularly in four states of Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh where assembly elections are certain to be held in November.

Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao, Home Minister S. B. Chavan and many other ruling party leaders have said in the past that the Government would ban communal parties which is a euphemism for the BJP. Accepting the challenge, BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president L. K. Advani has already announced that his organisation would contest the elections on the plank of Hindutva. Having fought the last elections on the issue of the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, there is apparently no going back for the BJP.

A senior bureaucrat expressed the fear that the proposed measures would lead to the politicisation of bureaucracy. Returning officers being district magistrates will find it difficult to go against the wishes of those in power. "Since elections are a life-and-death issue for contestants, those in power will go to any length to exert pressure on returning officers to postpone a contest or cancel the nomination of a rival if they find they are heading for a defeat," he remarked.

Under the existing provisions, election of a candidate having allegedly misused religion for electoral purposes can be challenged in a court only after the contest is over. These provisions provide for a postponement in the event of the death of one of contestants. Presently, there is no provision for the cancellation of nomination during the campaign.

Sources said while detailed provisions were being finalised the exhibits of religious figures like those of Ram by BJP candidates in the last elections might result in the poll postponement or cancellation of nominations.

Official sources are tight-lipped about the provisions of the bill. But that the exercise was on was indicated by the Home Minister himself to a Janata Dal delegation led by Sharad Yadav some days ago. The delegation included, among others, Srikant Jena and Mohan Singh.

The BJP has apparently got a hint about what is happening in the Law Ministry. Party veteran Atal Behari Vajpayee has demanded that the Government should spell out the proposed measure in detail.

Constitution Said To Recognize Religion's Role in Politics

93AS1071A Cochin *THE WEEK* in English
25 Jul 93 pp 35,37

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] "Those who talk of separation of religion and politics do not know what religion is," said Gandhiji. He maintained that religion had to guide politics lest politics should turn immoral.

Indeed, from the ancient times to the present, India's political history has witnessed the employment of all conceivable patterns of relationship between religion and politics. Clerical involvement, religious symbols, the use of religious places, religion-oriented political parties and pressure groups have all been part of this history and have called to question the ideal of secularism.

The Indian concept of secularism implies that the state does not establish or uphold any particular religion, and protects or treats all religious equally. As opposed to the western model which is accommodative of religion but implies separate operational spheres for the church and the state.

In Islam, the political structure is shaped by the revolutionary concepts of the unity of God and the unity of human origin. In fact, Islam recognizes no Caesar and therefore no separation between God and Caesar. Sovereignty rests with Allah and none else.

According to the Sikh view, there can be no separation between an individual and society; the religious, spiritual and political activity covers the totality of life of both individual and society. The Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee [SGPC], in fact, emerged as a unique institution with the blending of religion and politics. This came about when, following the Gurdwara Reform Movement (1920-25), the government enacted the Sikh Gurdwaras and Shrines Act in 1925 abolishing the hereditary tenure of the priests and put the SGPC in charge of the gurdwaras.

In British India the influence of the government-funded churches was such that the churches increasingly came to be suspected as a branch of the government. Later, however, the general discontent with the British rule burst forth in the form of the 1857 uprising which represented a religio-political phenomenon and demonstrated the sweep

of religion over politics. (It was formented by Hindu priests and Muslim ulemas as well.)

Ironically, secularism is generally understood in terms of separation of religion and politics. But a wide range of conflicting views—from it being a Hindu concept to being a euphemism for appeasement of the minorities—also exist. Nehru himself stated, in 1954, that the use of the expression was perhaps not a happy one and that it was being used for want of a better word. In fact, attempts to introduce the word secular in the Constitution failed twice in the constituent assembly and it was only in 1976 (Constitution Forty-Second Amendment Act) that 'secular' was inserted into the preamble to describe India as "sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic".

The secular structure as envisaged in the Constitution is seen as a political response to Indian problems. The Indian Constitution, along with the laws of the land, recognizes the interplay of forces of religion and politics in a given framework. For instance, abolition of untouchability (Article 17) is regarded a state interference in the religious practices of a section of Hindus. So also the constitutional provision (Article 25) which empowers the state to enact law for throwing open temples to all sections of Hindus.

This right to legislate in matters of social and religious customs was asserted during the British rule when in 1929 the Regulation XVII applicable to the Bengal Presidency declared *sati* illegal and punishable. This followed the campaign of Raja Ram Mohan Roy against *sati*. Bombay and Madras soon followed on the heels of the Bengal regulation.

The right of religious heads to excommunicate any member of the community on religious grounds or on ground of breach of an essential part of the religion is protected by Article 26 (b). The Supreme Court held the Bombay Prevention of Excommunication Act, 1949, void saying that exercise of such power 'formed part of the management of the community through its religious head in matters of religion.'

However, the use or rather the misuse of this right in the elections in Andhra Pradesh (1955) and Kerala (1959-60) brought matters to a head. Roman Catholic Bishops were said to have issued a stern warning of excommunication to catholics supporting the communist or revolutionary socialist parties.

A communist-sponsored private bill to restrict such political activity sparked a debate in Parliament over the use of the Catholic church for political purposes and the participation of the ecclesiastical personnel in political activity. The bill was rejected by both houses of Parliament. However, subsequently, the Representation of the People Act, 1951, made any appeal to religion during an electoral process a corrupt practice.

On the issue of religio-political interaction, Article 25(2) empowers the state to regulate or restrict any economic, financial, political, or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice. Attempts to include the term prohibition in the clause, however, failed. It was felt that 'the call for a total separation of politics and religion

is extraneous and contradictory to the thinking, philosophy and the spirit of our secular democracy and is negated by the express provisions of our Constitution.'

The state's role was seen as closely related to the unorganized nature of religion in the country, particularly Hinduism. The question which arises is: If Hinduism is in need of reform, who is going to reform it? Lacking effective organization means and driven into castes, sects and sub-sects, Hinduism (or at least progressive Hindus) turns to the state.

Ironically, in 1988, in what was billed as the first step in separating religion from politics an ordinance was promulgated to prevent the misuse of religious institutions for political and criminal purposes.

The Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Ordinance was brought forth in the light of the situation in Punjab. However, in its reach and scope, the legislation applied equally to mosques, temples, churches and gurdwaras all over the country including Jammu and Kashmir.

The Constitution interacts with religion at several points. Besides provisions such as Article 17 (abolishing untouchability), Article 25 (temple entry), Article 28(2) (permitting religious instruction in educational institutions), and Article 30(2) (grants to educational institutions run by religious minorities), the Constitution reserves seats in Parliament and the legislatures for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and the Anglo-Indian community. It empowers the state to make special provisions for the advancement of the socially and educationally backward classes.

The provision (article 48 in the Directive Principles of State Policy) on ban on cow slaughter is yet another where religion makes its presence felt. It directs the state to take steps to ban the slaughter of cows and calves which are held divine by Hindus. This provision has a Moghul precedent whereby an edict was issued to prevent cow slaughter in view of the Hindu sentiment and sanctity attributed to the cow.

The Constitution also provides for maintenance of certain Hindu temples and shrines. However, this has resulted in state involvement in trusts, temple administrations, more than what is required to prevent maladministration. For instance, the Commissioner, Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments, is said to be more powerful than the Archbishop of Canterbury. Also, one of the first acts of the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Jayalitha, after she took over was to order the renovation of temples in the state.

The Constitution also sees the need for a uniform civil code (Article 44 in the directive principles) replacing the personal laws of all communities.

Religion is recognized as a powerful institution of social control in India and it is inevitable that a number of legislation, too, should interact with it. The legal system admits the need to respect religious susceptibilities in the interest of stability.

However, as G. M. Banatwalla says: "The current Indian discourse on religio-political interaction appears to lack a

perspective of its own and is consequently enmeshed in a web of confused stereotypes, false worldview, prejudices and coarse polemics."

Attempt To Ban Religion From Politics Questioned

93AS1109G Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
3 Aug 93 p 8

[Article by N. J. Nanporia: "Society Steeped in Opium"]

[Text] There is something in the Indian psyche that instinctively separates the ideal from reality, places it on a pedestal and extends to it all the reverence that is its due. Reality in turn is relegated to a world of its own so exclusive that it remains untouched by the ideal.

There is always everywhere—in all cultures—a gap between theory and practice. However, nowhere is it made as unbridgeable as it is in India, while maintaining the pretence that it does not exist. This is the large element of fantasy at the heart of the proposal to "delink religion from politics". After all, there is nothing more glaringly obvious than at every turn the conduct of political affairs in this country is influenced by caste, communal and religious considerations.

Leave aside such obtrusive features of the political scene as the Muslim League and or the new breed of politicized *sadhus* or the pronouncements of the likes of the *shahi imam* of the Delhi Jama Masjid, Syed Bukhari, or the unabashed *Hindutva* claims of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Is it possible to conceive of an election campaign that does not take the religious and other related factors into account?

Ayodhya is only an extravagant assertion of something deeply inherent in the fabric of Indian society as it actually is and not as recommended by one selective conception of the ideal.

Yet, despite the entire weight of this evidence, both the law and the Election Commission's "moral code" call on candidates to note "appeals to caste or communal feelings for securing votes" have been banned. Over the years, such appeals have been commonplace in political campaigning by all parties. So what we have here is a law so remote from ground reality and so inapplicable it is respected only by way of ritual and formal gestures of approval.

It could be said a law of this sort is needed all the more precisely because there is a widespread defiance of its provisions. Thus the government's proposed legislation is designed to reinforce the existing prohibitions, it could be claimed. But a law that reflects a genuine consensus is one thing and can be readily enforced. A law that runs against the established grain by ignoring the inherent nature of a given society is quite a different matter.

When a BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader in the Rajya Sabha was successfully prosecuted for seeking votes "in the name of religion" it only highlighted how widespread this practice is and how lacking in any relevance such a law is in the Indian context. Since the reality of this is apparent to all, including the sponsors of the proposed legislation, what explains this insistence on something that reduces the law to a mockery?

That the law cannot be successfully applied is of little concern to its sponsors. Its enactment alone, with its obvious motivation against the BJP, justifies it on grounds of political expediency. Beyond this the Congress leadership is giving itself, by way of the legislation, a certificate of ideological respectability.

It is a part of the prevailing ethos that what are thought to be some self-evident truths are as such uncritically accepted. Among these is the proposition religion and politics do not mix. This has been repeated so often it has acquired a spurious validity and also the force of an edict no one is inclined to question. Both the Constitution and the electoral law have reinforced it and the idea of the new legislation is to buttress it even more.

As a result we have a climate in which no party eager to establish its credentials can afford not to join the chorus in favor of excluding religion from public life. There is a widespread verbal endorsement of it and a proportionate increase in its inconsistency with ground reality.

This is not so much hypocrisy as the remarkable ability of the Indian psyche to sincerely salute the ideal while happily adjusting to the demands of the real world. The purpose of the first is to establish one's good intentions for everyone to see and of the second to get on with things as they happen to be and that cannot be altered.

The gap between the two is not regretted. It is simply made inviolate, keeping the two worlds distinct and separate. But the consequences of this are several fold.

First, the fact the "no mix" formula is a part of the intellectual baggage inherited from the British is totally obscured. Second, the failure to see this deflects attention from what is really needed. This is a concentrated bid to ensure the unavoidable mix of politics and religion stops short of becoming a recipe for communal hostility and violence.

As things are, we have had foisted on us, as so much else besides, the notion that the religious-political mix is inherently evil and unworkable. But is it?

The separation of one from the other was administrative convenience for the British, to whom the preservation of law and order was a priority concern. For independent India to share this view is the easy way out and an evasion of the responsibility to reconcile politics with religion in a new dynamic. Third, a law that imposes on parties and politicians an obligation they cannot discharge even if they would like to can only bring itself into contempt and weaken the national fabric.

There are here, the makings of an ongoing conspiracy to wink at violations of the law while going through the motions of venerating it. Even the BJP, under the pressure of received doctrine, obliquely subscribes to the no mix theory by claiming Hinduism is not a religion.

That is a possible line of thought and exploration. It is not taken up because at the level of pretended belief we remain at the point at which the British left us. At the level of reality, however, Indian society insists on going its own way.

So the bottom line is to consider where political honesty lies. In fashioning a law that ignores the religious factor as

an integral and defining feature of a traditional society and to do this in deference to an alien concept? Or to acknowledge this is something to look at anew and concede the reality of religious conviction and the bearing it is bound to have on public affairs?

Mr T. N. Seshan, the chief election commissioner, has displayed an astonishing scrupulosity in his literal application of the electoral law in situations where everyone else is more than willing to take part in the winking game. But how often and for how long can he try and uphold a law which is entirely at odds with the national grain?

If what is tacitly understood to be only theory is suddenly sought to be applied, with penalties to match, only chaos can ensue. It is not religion and politics that do not mix but ritual and reality.

In great part this failure to abandon legend and cling to reality is due to the intellectual conditioning to which the Indian establishment has been exposed through the British connection.

Having itself lost the capacity to believe and reduced religion to a part-time activity, the West has elevated the no mix conviction to the status of an oracular truth. Any incursion of religious fervor into the public domain is dismissed as something primitive and feudal.

Religion is seen in the West as a dark and malevolent force, opposed to all that is restrained and reasonable. The term most favored in this context is "tolerance", yet it is an expedient substitute for indifference.

A society in which the capacity to believe has almost reached the vanishing point is hardly qualified to comment on the religious and political affairs of a society in which the belief *qua* belief has a moral force that spills over beyond the limits of conventional religion.

This is why Islamic fundamentalism is in such bad odor in the West. This is why, apropos the Salman Rushdie affair, Mrs Margaret Thatcher, then the British prime minister, instructed her education minister to deliver a lecture for the benefit of the less privileged on how all civilized societies keep religion well away from politics. That she should believe this is her right. That India should echo and pretend to endorse it is inexcusable.

'Secular Cleansing' Seen Behind Bill Banning Religion

93LA0190B Bombay THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 13 Aug 93 p 29

[Article by Swapan Dasgupta: "Turning Minorities Into Cannon Fodder"]

[Text] The Bill introduced in the monsoon session of Parliament to outlaw the mixture of religion and politics is divided into two parts. First, a constitutional amendment which seeks to put a rigid definition to the declaration about India being a "secular" republic. In short, a nebulous principle will be codified. Second, the Representation of People's Act will be modified to empower returning officers to disqualify all those candidates whose campaign is seen to violate the secular principle.

It does not require any great insider knowledge to realize that the proposed legislation is an attempt by the beleaguered Congress government at the Center to check the growth of the Hindutva parties, particularly the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and its ally, the Shiv Sena. Even before the Babri shrine was felled on December 6 last year, a powerful and vocal section of the secularist lobby had been demanding statutory pre-poll curbs on the BJP. In his presidential address to the AICC [All India Congress Committee] session at Tirupati, P. V. Narasimha Rao first hinted at such a possibility. Subsequently, the Arjun Singh lobby within the Congress backed by a vocal section of the intelligentsia, has been demanding laws that would, in effect, put the BJP outside the pale of electoral politics.

The reasons for the panic in the secularist camp are obvious. The 1991 election was the second consecutive warning that the Ram Janam Bhoomi movement had captured the imagination of large sections of Hindus, at least in the "cow belt". The demolition of the Babri shrine, far from repelling the Hindu masses from the Sanagh Parivar, contributed to an unprecedented outpouring of Hindutva. The intelligentsia may have been horrified at the damage to India's image of quietist tolerance, but to large sections of the majority community a grave historical wrong had been righted.

The ground-level explosion of Hindu pride is also at the root of the paralysis that has gripped the ruling party and other centrist and left formations. The large crowds that the BJP leader, L.K. Advani, has been routinely attracting and the constant stream of notables flocking to identify themselves with the saffron bandwagon have unnerved the ruling party. Uttar Pradesh has been virtually given up as a lost case and there are severe doubts about the Congress' ability to win back Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. To add to its woes, the BJP has also made spectacular inroads into Gujarat, Karnataka and Maharashtra. Coupled with the breakdown of the Congress-AIADMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam] alliance in Tamil Nadu and the Telugu Desam revival in Andhra Pradesh, the BJP advance has virtually ensured that the Congress is unlikely to return to power in a future general election.

The political backdrop is central to understanding the political rationale of the threatened legislation. Just as Vishwanath Pratap Singh stumbled upon a forgotten Mandal Commission report to upstage Devi Lal in 1990, the Congress has discovered secularism to avert an impending rout in the elections.

The point is not that the move is grounded on very cynical assumptions. Far more important is that the proposed law runs counter to the entire basis of Indian nationhood. It is a crude attempt, bordering on the sinister, to emasculate Hindu society.

For a start, it has to be realized that the conventional western definition of religion cannot be applied to Hinduism. That Hinduism has no church, established structures of command, all-pervasive rituals nor any overriding philosophy are well-known. This is the reason why, before the term Hinduism was popularized, the term *sanatan*

dharma was used to signify attachment to certain religious-cultural norms. This understanding is crucial to the realization that Indian culture and the *sanatan dharma* are absolutely inseparable. To contest this, as various secularists have attempted, hits at the very national identity of the country.

It is, for example, no accident that political discourse in India has traditionally centered on allusions from the *Ramayan*, *Mahabharat* and *Puranas*. Ram is not a personal deity of too many Indians and it is unlikely that too many *pooja* rooms will have an icon of the Epic hero. Indeed, to a section of Indians, Ram is merely a mythological figure born out of the fertile imagination of our ancestors.

Yet these divergent perceptions do not diminish the importance of even the centrality of Ram and other symbols of the Indian being. The fact remains that Ram belongs to the public domain. He is a metaphor for the traditional Indian identity, the *maryada purshottam* whose inspiration determines the contours of an ideal *Ram Rajya*. As Girilal Jain once wrote: "It would be in order to say that Ram of Balmiki is no mere cultural hero, as he has been made out to be partly in the Hindu search for self-respect in the long period of retreat and defeat which is still not over. He is, above all, an exemplar for the ordering of the community's polity. That is why *shakti* (power) is regarded as vital a component of his personality as *sheela* (conduct suffused with a moral vision, but not bound by traditional, received wisdom)".

Jain went on to suggest that Mahatma Gandhi consciously promoted the vision of *Ram Rajya*: "He was looking for an ideal concept for the reordering of India's public life when she gained freedom... In that search, he landed inevitably on Ram; inevitably because no one else has ever better embodied the essence of Hinduism in the public domain". (*Sunday Mail*, November 4, 1990). In his autobiography, Gandhi elaborated on his position: "Those who say that religion has nothing to do with politics do not know what religion means".

It is this age-old recourse to the indigenous idiom to explain public life which has distressed those who choose to remain wilfully ignorant of Indian culture and tradition. In a sense, the fault can be located in the attempt to view secularism as *dharma nirapekshata* rather than as *sarva dharma sambhav*. One disavows religion, the other is centered on tolerance and co-existence of all faiths. The former is the ideal of rootless cosmopolitanism, the latter is consistent with the ethos of this country.

In the last century, Abbe Dubois sneered at the fact that "Hindu imagination is such that it cannot be excited except by what is monstrous and extravagant". In his introduction to Sir Valentine Chirol's infamous *Indian Unrest*, Sir Alfred Lyall analyzed the nationalist movement in terms that would undoubtedly endear him to today's rootless secularists: "...we have the strange spectacle...of a party capable of resorting to methods that are both reactionary and revolutionary, of men who offer prayer and sacrifices to ferocious divinities and denounce the government by seditious journalism, preaching primitive superstition in the very modern form of leading articles. The

mixture of religion with politics has always produced a highly explosive compound, especially in India".

In a sense, the debate is as old as modern India itself and the "problem" of public concerns being articulated in the idiom of morality and *dharma* is unlikely to go away just because a nervous government deems it fit to pass legislation. The Hindu grievances over the vandalism of medieval rulers has not disappeared because of the Place of Worship Act. Nor will this Act ever serve as a deterrent if Mathura and Kashi join Ayodhya on the national agenda.

However, the proposed legislation could well lead to certain short-term consequences. First, it is likely to encourage the secularists to become more aggressive and outrageous in their utterances and demands. The "educationist" who recently demanded before the farcical Citizen's Tribunal on Ayodhya that school authorities be restrained from permitting the recitation of a *Saraswati vandana* each morning may well become the type at the forefront of a new secular cleansing.

Second, if the legislation does enable the government to outlaw the BJP and its allies from participating in electoral politics, it will not herald a new, secular millennium. On the contrary, it could well trigger a ferocious reaction which, in turn, could lead to the initiative passing into the hands of people such as Bal Thackeray.

Far from insulating the minorities from the merchants of hate, the new legislation could make them into convenient cannon fodder in a movement of assertive majoritarianism.

Congress Bill on Religion, Politics Seen Faulty

93AS1070H Cochin THE WEEK in English
25 Jul 93 pp 31-32

[Article by Ravindra Dubey: "A Tall Order: Problems Aplenty in Proposed Bill"]

[Text] Amidst a series of lengthy and exhaustive meetings, the mammoth exercise is on. Files and officials keep shuttling between North Block, which houses the home ministry, and Shastri Bhavan, where the law ministry office is situated. The only agenda on the priority list of both ministries is to finalise the draft of the bill regarding the separation of religion and politics.

Proposed to be passed in the monsoon session of Parliament, beginning on July 26, the constitutional amendment bill will introduce specific amendments to part three of the Constitution which deals with fundamental rights. The amendments are meant to define secularism and to enjoin upon the Indian state to take all steps necessary to separate religion from politics. Apart from this, the operative part of this legislation is the amendment to the Representation of the People Act, 1951, empowering returning officers to disqualify, during an election campaign, a candidate indulging in anti-national or anti-secular propaganda. The bill also seeks to amend Articles 102 and 191 of the Constitution to provide for the additional disqualification of an MP [member of Parliament] or an MLA [member of Legislative Assembly].

"Such a move was given a serious consideration after the ban on communal organisation proved ineffective in the wake of several adverse court judgments," said a senior home ministry official.

That seems to be the reason why the government also intends to amend the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, to confer upon Parliament exclusive powers to ban organisations whose activities are detrimental to the nation's integrity or are aimed at disrupting harmony among different sections of people.

The Congress sees a two-fold advantage in separating religion and politics. Outside the party it thinks this is the only way to woo Muslims and sceptical Hindu voters back into its fold. The series of decisions and non-decisions since the shilanyas in 1989 and especially the Centre's passiveness during the demolition of the Babri Masjid had alienated these segments. Thus the party had to do something highly demonstrative against the Hindutva forces which would be acceptable to Muslims and those Hindus who are lukewarm towards the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. P.V. Narasimha Rao's speech at Tirupati was an indicator of the bill coming up before Parliament. Rao had said the polity had to be cleansed of religious pollution and that his government would talk to like-minded political parties on this crucial aspect. But the congress did nothing to implement this clarion promise of its president, in spite of strong pressure from its own ranks, who were alarmed at the growth of the BJP.

The second reason which has prompted this legislation is the imminence of assembly elections in the states formerly ruled by the BJP. Thus it has become a matter of expediency as much as principle.

The internal schism of the Congress also compelled Rao to plan this legislation. The idea of making religious appeal a ground for disqualification was to sow confusion in the enemy ranks. Apart from Arjun Singh, who has been a vociferous advocate for depriving the Hindu card for the BJP in the electoral arena, leaders like Narin Dutt Tiwari, Jagannath Mishra, the Shukla brothers in Madhya Pradesh and several cabinet ministers and working committee members have been demanding this action to show that the Congress is not sleeping over the issue.

The pro-Narasimha group in the Congress feels that as far as opposition to the BJP is concerned Arjun Singh has stolen a march over the Prime Minister. Something had to be done. Narasimha Rao wants to prove that instead of confronting communalism as Minister for Human Resources Development Arjun Singh wants him to do, he prefers to take on the challenge posed by the menace of communalism. And if such a legislation is passed the credit will certainly go to the Prime Minister.

"Part three of the Constitution (Fundamental Rights) is proposed to be amended to give meaning and content to the word 'secular' which was included in the Preamble in 1976. In the present electoral law, once the nomination of a candidate is accepted, till his election there is no adjudication forum to decide questions relating to electoral disqualification. It is proposed to make a major change in the Representation of People's Act so that a candidate can be disqualified while the election process is on, if it is

found that the candidate had either violated the Constitution or the specific provisions of the Act.

The amendments to Article 102 (Parliament) and Article 181 (State Legislature) will pave the way for the disqualification of a member if he, after making and subscribing to the oath of affirmation for the tenth schedule, declares that he does not owe allegiance to the Constitution or promotes communal, caste or racial hatred.

The Representation of the People Act is to be amended simultaneously to confer on the returning officer the power to hear complaints about a candidate incurring disqualification referred to in the proposed amendments of Articles 102 and 181 after his nomination is accepted and to cancel the candidature of such persons after a summary enquiry.

An amendment is also proposed to Section 29 A of the Representation of the People Act regarding the registration of political parties with the Election Commission. It will "not register an association as a political party if it bears a religious name."

The Election Commission will be conferred the power to deregister a political party if it were to come to the conclusion that the basis on which the registration was given no longer obtains and that the activities of the party concerned were at variance with the declaration made.

But there would be practical difficulties in implementing some of the proposed amendments. For instance, the proposed amendment to the Representation of the People Act envisages powers to the returning officers to take action against a candidate during the course of the election. But there is no guarantee that he will get a fair deal given the politicisation of the bureaucracy.

The district returning officers—who are district magistrates or collector—cannot afford to incur the wrath of a party which will be coming to power in a particular state. That aside, what is the yardstick by which the returning officer will determine whether the conduct of a candidate was communal? Will it be based on his speeches, his attire or tilak? And if at all certain guidelines are set up to determine a party as being communal, will they be uniformly applicable to all the parties?

Besides, it may be impossible for a returning officer to monitor all the constituencies in his area.

It is not clear how the independent candidates will be treated under this legislation. And if the members of a party such as Shiv Sena contests the elections as independents how will they be dealt with?

The process of determining the communal nature of a party is the biggest hurdle that the government is facing. Even in the proposed Amendment of Part three of Constitution, the first point is that state shall take all steps necessary to separate religion from politics, including banning any association or body of individual citizens from participating in any political activity if its membership is open to persons on grounds of religion, race, caste, or any of them. If one talks of the RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh], the membership is not open to persons on any of these bases. A Sikh can be a hardcore swayamsevak of the sangh and anybody who may not be a devout Hindu

can become its member. There is no question of castes or race in RSS. Similarly, if a Hindu wants to become a member of any Muslim organisation, membership is no problem.

Similar is the case of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967. The grounds on the basis of which an organisation can be banned are yet to be formulated. Instead, the emphasis is on conferring exclusive power on Parliament to ban such organisations.

There might be the chances for a clash between the fundamental rights and the new amendments.

While the home and the law ministries are working overtime on this amendment bill, doubts are being expressed whether the bill will be passed by Parliament or not. Because these amendments can mar the electoral prospects of any party. Undoubtedly, the legislation is the fallout of the Ayodhya episode as far as Congress is concerned, but the party will have to make its stand clear on the issue and therefore it cannot desist from mentioning it in its manifesto. Any candidate can easily be dubbed as communal or guilty of having violated the provisions of the amendments. The sword is hanging on the head of every party in this manner and Congress is no exception. And so are the Akali Dal and the Muslim League.

The proposed legislation at the moment is not being taken seriously by the other parties. Even the BJP which is likely to be the most affected, for they cannot leave the Ayodhya issue out of their election campaigns, is not serious about it. "Let them bring the bill in Parliament. Then we shall decide," said BJP's thinktank Keval Rattan Malkani. "If we talk about building a temple in Ayodhya, it is religion in politics and if they talk about building a masjid there, then they are being secular," he added. Malkani thinks that it is premature to even discuss the issue.

The legislation if passed will have most of its impact in northern India what with the dust of the Ayodhya demolition still to settle down. And Uttar Pradesh is the source of strength for any political party in Parliament. The last elections provided the most glaring example of how political parties can misuse religion. It was the Ayodhya issue which had brought the BJP to power in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. In fact, it is a battle for the north, which Congress believes this legislation will help them win.

Congress' Religion Bill Seen Misplaced, Inappropriate

93LA0190A Bombay THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 20 Aug 93 pp 14-15

[Article by Praful Bidwai: "Religion Bill: Wrong From the Start"; quotation marks as published]

[Text] *Recently, the government introduced in Parliament the Constitution (80th Amendment) Bill seeking to delink religion from politics and to curb communalism. Not by a long shot, says Praful Bidwai. In fact, it undermines what it sets out to do: it equates religion with caste and language. Those who fight against casteism could easily be guilty of promoting 'feelings of enmity'.*

So low is the credibility of the Narasimha Rao government, and so high its ineptitude, that almost everything it does in the name of reform evokes derision, suspicion, even hostility. And so venal is the politics of some of its functionaries that everything they touch turns to dust.

This is certainly true, and with a vengeance, of the latest product of the government's juridical exertions, viz the Constitution (80th Amendment) Bill, which it introduced last month in order, it said, to curb communalism and separate religion from politics. Coming from a government that has done more to indulge and appease Hindu communalism than any other, and which allowed the Babri mosque to be destroyed and thousands of people to be butchered by communalists, such a claim always sounded hollow. The fact that the government tried desperately to introduce it on the opening day of the monsoon session of the Parliament confirmed the suspicion that it intended to divide the Opposition.

Worse, a reading of the Bill leaves one aghast. The Bill vests enormous power in returning officers, relatively junior bureaucrats, to disqualify candidates from contesting elections if they make use of religion or religious symbols. Highly politicized bureaucrats, a fast-growing species, are liable—especially under the advice of the likes of T. N. Seshan—to misuse the power, itself questionable on account of its omnibus character, but bound up particularly nasty consequences because of the practical impossibility of an appeal process.

The Bill fails to define what constitutes misuse of religion in election campaigns. Where it does stipulate a specific instance, namely in the use of a religious name by a party or body, it goes to an extreme. Under this provision, the Shiv Sena, Muslim League and Akali Dal would cease to be legitimate contesters of elections by virtue of the names alone. There may be a case of proscribing self-avowedly fascist or communal parties that calculatedly use violence during election campaigns but that ground follows from their activities not names. The Akali Dal should logically have the same right to exist as, say the Christian Democrats in many countries in Europe.

The most objectionable part of the legislation is that it effectively demolishes what it set out to do: it equates religion with altogether different categories of caste and language and seeks to disqualify those who promote "feelings of enmity...between different classes of citizens of India on grounds of religion, race, caste, community or language." In other words, those who struggle against the oppression of the upper castes—a Constitutionally recognized social evil—or fight, say, against the domination or imposition of an alien language or dialect—as has happened in numerous parts of the country in perfectly popular agitations—are put on a par with rank communalists or those who want to create a denominational state.

The Bill, then, has disturbing anti-democratic, anti-pluralist consequences. However, the communalists' assault on it has an altogether different basis and motive. Essentially, they—the BJP in particular—do not want to separate religion from politics and the sphere of faith and private belief from the public realm. Nor do they want reasonable restrictions to be—imposed on the harnessing

of religious or ethnic prejudice and hatred to political ends—restrictions that are necessary in any healthy democracy.

That is precisely why they have been using a variety of arguments against the secular democratic standpoint. All of them are specious. For instance, the *dharma* that L. K. Advani so glibly talks about has nothing in common with a specific religion, leave alone political Hinduism of the BJP-RSS-VHP- [Bharatiya Janata Party-Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-Vishwa Hindua Parishad] Bajrang Dal-Shiv Sena variety. Non-human subjects, even inanimate objects, have *dharma*, which refers to their "true" nature and laws of being and motion in an ancient metaphysical tradition.

Again, it is wrong to invoke, in defense of communalism. Gandhiji's selectively quoted and oversimplified statements that the true and noble spirit of all religions should infuse the practice of politics. Gandhiji conceived of religion in moral and spiritual, not political terms and he regarded all genuine religious discourse as a unity and all religions to be identical in their essence. However, he firmly rejected the notion of religion as the organizing principle of society and politics. What a cruel irony that Gandhiji who crusaded against communalism all his life, and who fell a victim to a communalist's bullet, should now be invoked by his assassin's political heirs!

Yet again, it is futile to argue that religion is "natural" or "organic" to society and therefore must be allowed to intrude into politics. The separation of the public sphere from the world of personal faith and from the divine order, civilized political competition in the public sphere again, regard for plurality and diversity, and concern for civil liberties and human rights are all equally "natural" to a modern democratic society or one which aspires to that status.

Finally, the communalists' complaint that they are being singled out in the Bill is utterly devoid of justification. Potentially, as we have seen, all opposition candidates could become victims of the Bill's provisions. It is also disingenuous for BJP leaders to plead that they should not, in some sense, be singled out. They are indeed singular in their influence, political practice and ideology, which have caused the worst communal havoc.

The BJP—and its Muslim, Sikh and other counterparts—is indeed qualitatively different from all other parties and currents of the Center, left, even the right. Its politics is essentially exclusivist, it accords one religious community alone a special political status, it equates its own hatred-driven, anti-pluralist, obnoxious brand of Hinduism with patriotism and nationalism, and it seeks the effective political disenfranchisement of the minorities.

The BJP routinely but selectively uses violence as an instrument of political mobilization. Its recent electoral successes are seriously dependent on, indeed inseparable from, its calculated politicization of faith. It fosters and exploits hatred and unspeakably irrational and ignorant prejudices against a particular religious group. Through its politics of hatred, the BJP has come to represent a serious

threat to the very foundations of Indian democracy which, by its nature, must accept secularism and pluralism as a premise.

Any effort at resecularizing those foundations must involve serious mass-level political mobilization by the secular parties. And secondarily, it must include some purposive, non-discriminatory action at the level of the state to enforce the law of the land and the secular spirit of the Constitution. Narasimha Rao's Congress has been loath to do the first. And it has chosen the easiest, laziest, tokenist way of doing the second, in a manner that robs the effort of sincerity of purpose and political meaning.

This is not to argue that no legislative action is necessary to prevent and punish the blatant use of communal appeal. It is. The disqualification of communal legislators by the Bombay High Court under the Representation of the People Act shows both the possibilities and limitations of the existing laws. The Bharucha rulings are solid in their basis, but the disqualification has come years after the election, making it of doubtful political value.

Surely, there is a case for an unambiguous definition of what constitutes communal appeal and the misuse of religious sentiment, for a code of conduct for political parties, for prospective rather than retrospective disqualification in certain flagrant cases, such as those involving some Shiv Sena, Islamic Seva Sangh, Bajrang Dal and pro-Bhindranwale Akali candidates, and for speeding up hearings in election petitions.

Surely, this is not too much to ask in a situation in which not just the minorities, but Dalits and tribals, people from the South and the East, and above all secular people from different groups (including the Hindus themselves) feel threatened and insecure as a result of what happened December 6 onwards.

Separation of Religion From Politics Seen Impossible

93AS1070G Cochin THE WEEK in English
25 Jul 93 pp 28-30

[Article by Nihal Singh: "Putting on An Act"]

[Text] It is entirely in character with the dilapidated state of the Congress party that it should seek to fight political battles with symbolic acts. The central Congress leadership's proposal to enact a new law to separate politics from religion can only represent a token gesture which will do little to reverse the growing influence religion exercises over politics in India.

A measure of such influence has always existed in Indian politics. Apart from such religion-based parties as the Akali Dal in Punjab, the injection of religion was done somewhat surreptitiously. It is no secret that the caste and religious complexion of a candidate has been a traditional factor in almost every party's selection process.

What has changed in the last two years is the Bharatiya Janata Party's [BJP] decision to embrace Hinduism, ostentatiously and in public, to fight its political battles in its quest for power. The building of the Ram temple in

Ayodhya by demolishing the Babri mosque was the most dramatic illustration of the BJP strategy.

As the BJP's confidence has grown in recent years, it has elaborated a new basis of nationalism. In sharp contrast to the Congress—and the nation's—credo of secularism, the BJP starts with the premise of a Hindu India and seeks to place all other religions and their followers on a different footing. The party reaped rich dividends in the North with the Ayodhya temple issue, greatly helped by the decline of the Congress and the opportunism of other opposition parties.

It is well to recognise that the fabric of secularism was becoming increasingly threadbare in recent decades. With religion often determining the choice of candidates in elections, compromises were made all along the line, with Kerala giving sanction to religion-based parties and alliances, at one time a unique phenomenon in the country. Religion-based parties evolved their own rationale and were led by leaders who had developed a pronounced vested interest in this cosy relationship between religion and secularism. The left was less culpable on this count than other parties.

Nevertheless, the official credo of secularism did represent the basis of the Indian nation state. It was an assertion by the country's founding fathers that, unlike Pakistan and other countries, India was a state based on the principle of equality for all and for the separation of religion from the affairs of the state.

In a sense, these precepts remained an ideal. Poverty, a bias against women, discrimination against Harijans and tribals and other backward classes remained a fact of life, blocking the precept of equality for all. But the decades since independence saw progress on these fronts, despite its halting nature and slow pace. And no one had frontally and successfully challenged the concept of the secular state.

The BJP's new challenge represents the evolution of Indian politics as much as world trends. The trend towards Islamic fundamentalism stemmed from the failure of such creeds as secular pan-Arabism symbolised by Egypt's Nasser or the Shah of Iran's dream of converting his country into a modern state after the European model. Different degrees of modernisation accentuated inequalities and bred alienation, and corruption sapped the strength of reforming regimes.

A return to religion in its narrowest interpretation provided a solace. Clerics in every Muslim nation had always looked askance at what they viewed as the evils of the modern secular state. They got their chance as one modernising regime after another faltered. Ayatollah Khomeini's was only the most dramatic demonstration of the potency of religion in usurping state power.

Other more recent trends have been influenced by the collapse of communism, the god that failed. The former nation state of Yugoslavia has reverted to tribal and religious warfare more reminiscent of a medieval age. In all the former European communist states, yesterday's atheist leaders have become today's God-fearing men and women. Religion and a scramble for reaching the haven of capitalism go hand in hand in the old communist world.

In the West, hedonism by itself has proved inadequate in meeting man's aspirations and needs. The United States has always been in the forefront in experimenting with the most outlandish of cults in people's quest for salvation. In recession-hit Europe, the fear of losing the good things in life has turned people to bigotry and hatred of the alien and the foreign.

In a world convulsed by such phenomena, India could not remain unaffected by the churning process. The BJP believes its time has come because domestic and international events are conspiring to bring it to power. Its problem is to reconcile its concept of a Hindu India with the heterogeneous and varied character of the country without tearing it apart.

The equivocation one finds in Congress ranks on the Hindutva concept is an acknowledgement of the country's changed political climate. Sufficient numbers of Hindus in North India are charged with the fervour of Hindutva to cast a lengthening shadow on the Congress. It is pointless to argue that the BJP philosophy does not represent true Hinduism with its essence of tolerance; other religions have been successfully distorted for political and partisan ends. Passing another law to bar religion from politics will merely serve BJP propaganda because the new law will be presented by it as a vindictive act by a declining party which is ungodly in its pseudo-secularism.

The point for the Congress party and the nation at large to determine is how to meet the BJP challenge effectively. The presence of the large Muslim minority, in addition to other minorities, gives a resonance to the BJP's Hindutva even as it places limitations upon it. Those who believe that straying away from secularism will spell ruin for India and destroy its democratic structure need to ponder over their response.

The answer found by leaders such as Mulayam Singh Yadav is limited in scope and is entirely related to electoral arithmetic. It could prove effective, in alliance with Kanshi Ram's Bahujan Samaj Party and the support of other parties, in denying Uttar Pradesh to the BJP. But such an alignment, founded on a narrow caste-based support and Mulayam Singh's own credo of being pro-Muslim, can hardly be a national answer.

The label of being pro-Muslim in a predominantly Hindu country can do a general political party little good. Nor does the answer lie in espousing the cause of the lower castes, except in specified regional areas such as Bihar. In electoral terms, the coming together of the non-BJP in as many constituencies as possible would help, but on the political and philosophical planes the BJP challenge must be met through other means. Passing a new law separating religion from politics would merely serve as an alibi for action.

The urgent need is to assess the political situation without blinkers. Twice the Indian electorate voted against the Congress party at the national level; twice it was betrayed by squabbling coalitions. The country is ready for a change if offered a convincing alternative and the BJP has been preening its feathers to present itself as the answer to the electorate's prayers.

It would be unrealistic to expect the Congress to reform itself so radically that it could hold the promise of leading the country for another generation. It is a tired old party that has, in essence, fulfilled its historical role. Since the only conceivable alternative to it would be the BJP in the short term, the non-BJP opposition and the Congress must enter into a compact to meet the threat jointly, as far as the Lok Sabha elections are concerned. Merely to state the proposition is to underline the formidable nature of the task.

The Congress and other political parties also need to reexamine the traditional Nehruvian propagation of secularism. Deeply influenced as Nehru and men of his generation were by liberal Western thought, they might have erred in making the concept too antiseptic for the Indian psyche. Secularism as a creed need not be anti-religion. The BJP, on the other hand, is challenging the very concept that morality or education should not be based on religion.

All Indian political parties, however, must make peace with the fact that religion in politics is here to stay. Sagacity lies in defining what this relationship should be. To propagate a Muslim-bashing campaign is anti-religion and patently wrong. The only way to counter forces exploiting the baser instincts of man for partisan profit is to tell the people that it is wrong and demonstrate to them through the teachings of men of their religion that it is so.

In its present demoralised state, the Congress cannot be expected to give more than a half-hearted answer to the BJP challenge. It therefore devolves on the non-BJP opposition parties to help the Congress if they do not want to make themselves irrelevant to the country's future orientation. The choice before the country has been narrowed down to a soft fall for the Congress—and the country—in letting the Independence party rule a little longer in the hope of other options emerging or a hard fall.

Parties With Religious Names May Not Contest

93AS1118H Bangalore DECCAN HERALD in English
28 Jul 93 p 1, 9

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] New Delhi, Jul 27—No association or body which bears a religious name would be allowed to be registered by the Election Commission as a political party, according to the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 1993. And those parties which at present have a religious name would be given 90 days to change their name.

Copies of the bill, dated July 25, were circulated today to the Lok Sabha MPs [members of Parliament] and the bill is likely to be moved after the no-confidence motion is put to vote in the House tomorrow.

Stating the objects and reasons for bringing forward the Bill, which has already been opposed by the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], it says that one of the worst "menaces that faces the country today is communalism." It fragments the society and holds a threat to the unity and integrity of India.

"Since a religious name could be said to contain an appeal to vote for the political party on the ground of religion

which would be detrimental to the cause of secular democracy, no such group would be allowed to be registered as a political party," the bill states.

Significantly, the bill provides for an appeal against the Election Commission orders to the Supreme Court. Appeals against a party of cancelling its registration if it bears a religious name can be made to the high court within whose jurisdiction the main office of the political party is. This provision will come under a new Section 29B to be included in the People's Representation Act, 1951, says the bill.

An accompanying Constitution (Eighth Amendment) Bill, 1993, says that "despite the safeguards provided in the Constitution communalism is taking roots and unless effective measures are urgently taken to curb it, it may become a threat to the secular and democratic ideals on which our society is based.

Therefore, it has become necessary to further amend the Constitution.

Towards this objective the Amendment Bill "confers power on Parliament to ban any association or body of individuals if it promotes or attempts to promote disharmony or feelings of enmity, hatred or ill will between different classes of citizens of India on grounds of religion, race, birth, residence, language, caste or community."

The bill would provide in Articles 102 and 191 that "making use of religion including religious symbols for the purpose of getting elected to Parliament or to the state legislature or attempting to promote ill will and hatred on the bases of religion, caste, or community would be grounds for disqualification."

Two other steps to further amend the constitution, according to the bill, are to amend the Ninth Schedule to increase therein the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Act, 1988 and to make certain consequential amendments in Article 226.

Akali Dal Supports Religion in Politics

93AS1070J Cochin THE WEEK in English 25 Jul 93 p 34

[Article by Vijaya Pushkarna: "A Heady Mix"]

[Text] For the Akalis, who were a powerful political group until the Akali Dal broke up into about a dozen factions, there is no saying where religion ends and politics begins.

But the parties accord first place to religion. Says Surjit Singh Barnala, former chief minister of Punjab: "We believe that religion cleanses politics and that politics cannot drop below a certain level because of the religious pressure."

The Akali Dal is intertwined with the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, that managers the historic gurdwaras, and religious congregations are as matter of right and routine used as political platforms. Often the priests decide which way the Sikhs should go. On crucial matters that are as personal as political and social in nature, the edict in the form of hukam nama comes straight from the Akal Takht, the highest authority of the Sikhs, and located within the Golden Temple complex.

All the members of the Shiromani Akali Dal now in many factions are necessarily Sikhs. There are associate members of other religious communities, and the Akalis have many times fielded Hindus and Muslims for assembly elections in Punjab. There has off and on been talks of admitting non-Sikhs into the parties as full-fledged members, but no final decision has been arrived at.

The main political conferences of the Akali Dal are held outside gurdwaras on festive occasions when traditional fairs draw lakhs of people. The leaders throw up ideas cloaked in historical parallels, whose appeal is instantaneous.

Ironically, while all Akalis agree that they belong to a religio-political party they strongly deny that they are communal. Most of them see their parties as regional as distinct from communal. Interestingly, the Akali Dal has once been in power with the Janata Party which in Punjab had the traditional Jana Sangh as constituent, one espousing the cause of Sikhs and the other that of Hindus.

The Congress never got involved in religion directly but of late Beant Singh has held political conferences at the traditional fairs and has addressed religious congregations. He has spoken from a stage where the slogan *bole so nihal...sat sri akal* was raised. He has attended a Vishwa Hindu Parishad function soon after the Babri Masjid was demolished. In Punjab, it is only the communists who have kept religion at bay.

Kerala Politics Said Permeated by Religious Considerations

93AS10701 *Cochin THE WEEK in English*
25 Jul 93 pp 33-34

[Article by Vinu Abraham: "Commanding Presence"]

[Text] A high level of political consciousness and a strong streak of secularism have been the hallmarks of public life in Kerala. They owed directly to the early strides made in education, and the guidance of an enlightened and progressive-minded leadership during the freedom struggle. But Kerala's politics has never been completely free from the influence of religious or communal groupings and the concomitant conflicts. However well-intentioned the early leaders of the nationalist movement had been, their bid to win the sympathies of Muslims through the Khilafat movement ultimately led to a ghastly tragedy in the erstwhile Malabar region. Thousands were killed in the bloody communal clashes which followed the Malabar revolt of 1921. The Hindu-Muslim divide which was created then has never quite been bridged.

In the southern parts of the state too, the earliest mass movements which sought redress of the grievances of certain religious and social groups from the princely regime had their unmistakable communal overtones. They got accentuated occasionally since then. Last year's bloody communal conflicts were but the latest confirmation of the vicious religious and communal undercurrents that still swept the state and determined the rhythm of its political and social life.

Though at an immediate level, the conflicts were between a new-born Islamic Sevak Sangh, the now-banned fundamentalist Muslim organisation, and RSS [Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh], the reactions of ordinary people and intellectuals to these incidents on the sectarian basis once again highlighted the deep nexus between religion and politics.

Both left and right political forces have been playing communal/religious cards at one time or other. In early 1950s while the Congress was in power in the Travancore-Cochin area, the then undivided communist party unleashed a whisper campaign among backward caste Hindus like Ezhavas that Congress was a 'Christian party'. This helped wean Ezhavas away from Congress in areas dominated by Christians. There was a parallel in the Malabar region too where the non-Congress forces continued to fight the district board elections and later the elections to the Madras Assembly.

But it was the 'liberation struggle' by the Congress and its allies against the first elected communist ministry in the world led by E.M.S. Namboodiripad which brought into the open the interaction between political and religious forces. The Christian community and Nair community formed the vanguard of the agitation. The Christian hierarchy, especially the Catholic church, convinced its followers that communism was 'Devil's own thesis' and hence should be rooted out from the society. Father Vadakken, a firebrand Catholic priest, and the Bishop of Trichur, a Catholic stronghold, spearheaded the campaign. According to P. Govinda Pillai, Marxist theoretician, that was the first time that religious forces in Kerala realised their might in political games.

In the election that followed in 1960, for the first time the Congress joined hands with the Muslim League which till then was an untouchable. Nehru had dismissed it as a 'dead horse'. The Muslim-Christian-Hindu (Nair) combine was so formidable that it could easily swamp the leftists out of power. The combination is still quite powerful though the clash of interest among these three resulted in frequent shifting of loyalties and realignments.

It was also during the late fifties and early sixties that church hierarchy shed its inhibitions and openly intervened in elections. Bishops sent circulars to be read in parishes, calling on followers to vote against communists. They were even threatened with excommunication and ostracism which provoked a Private Members Bill in Parliament seeking to prevent the church from intervening in elections. Several landmark election petitions were also filed.

The euphoria of the 1960 electoral success notwithstanding, the Congress was still shy of teaming up with the Muslim League in government. But to the dismay of the Congress, Christian community had already been through the paces and recognised the chance of asserting its supremacy over secular parties.

When P.T. Chacko, the charismatic Congress leader and home minister in R. Shankar ministry, had to resign following a scandal, many Christians and especially the Catholic church were led to believe that Chacko was sacrificed by other religious community leaders in Congress for their own interests. Thus the Congress split in 1965 and the Kerala Congress was formed by Christian

leaders to safeguard the interests of their community. Ever since, Kerala Congress has been playing a crucial role in the politics of Kerala. In fact, the left alliance too has not been able to ignore it. While the left front once embraced one splinter of Kerala Congress (Mani group), today it has Kerala Congress Joseph group as its ally.

Another offshoot of the growing influence of the Muslim League and the Christian-dominated Kerala Congress had been the birth of more political splinters drawing their strength from religious or communal loyalties. The National Democratic Party of the Nairs and the Socialist Republican Party of the Ezhavas, for instance.

The survival of Congress-led ministries in post-1977 period was often threatened by the conflicts within the Kerala Congress. It was especially the 82-87 Karunakaran ministry which had been the victim of constant pulls and pressures by Kerala Congress. But the Congress could never aspire to be free of the crutch of Kerala Congress for fear of alienating the Christian community, especially the Catholic Church.

IUML [Indian Union Muslim League], the party that was formed to safeguard Muslim interests, has been an equally influential player in the politics of the state. It was in 1967 that, IUML, thanks to CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist], realised its political potential when CPI(M) got isolated even from CPI [Communist Party of India], its ideological partner. E.M.S. Namboodiripad formed an alliance with IUML so that his party could tap Muslim vote banks in north Kerala. And it worked. As a reward for this help, Malappuram, a Muslim-dominated district, was formed by the ministry of EMS. Thus the Muslim community, like the Christians earlier, and its political representatives came to know of their power.

Later on IUML switched loyalties. But its support was never unconditional. Very recently the UDF [United Democratic Front] government was forced to declare Fridays as holidays in Muslim management schools, including those in which non-Muslim students are in the majority. These days, the presence of religion in politics is almost taken for granted.

Congress(I) Said Supporting Jharkhand Movement

93AS1109B Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
7 Aug 93 p 8

[Text] Ranchi, Aug 6. The Jharkhand movement seems to have found a new messiah. It is now the Congress (I) which has decided to go all out in favor of the demand for a separate Jharkhand State and, if required, to launch an agitation to bring the administrative machinery in the region to a halt. It now intends to compel the Center to grant, at least the Union Territory status, to the region comprising 16 districts of tribal Bihar.

The Chhotanagpur Santhal Pargana Regional Congress Committee [RCC] has decided to send a delegation of its officials to New Delhi to meet the President, the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister to urge them to concede the Jharkhandis' demand at the earliest. The

delegation, led by the RCC president, Mr Thomas Hansda, is expected to leave Ranchi today.

Mr Hansda told reporters here today that complete unanimity was arrived at among leaders of the party in the south Bihar region to launch a peaceful stir for attainment of the Jharkhand demand. He said the decision to send a team to the capital was taken at the meeting of the RCC here yesterday. While conceding that there had been differences of opinion among Congress (I) leaders of the region over the Jharkhand issue, Mr Hansda said that no objection was raised in yesterday's meeting, which gives credence to the fact that party leaders of Chhotanagpur and the Santhal Parganas were united on the question and would do everything for the attainment of the Jharkhand demand.

The RCC chief also said tribal Bihar Congress (I) leaders had agreed to accept the amended Jharkhand Region Development Council Bill for setting up an autonomous council in the region with wide administrative and financial powers. He charged the State Chief Minister, Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav, with trying to scuttle the demand by refusing to table the amended Jharkhand Council Bill in the State Assembly. Mr Hansda said the Chief Minister had resorted to the most undemocratic method of suppressing the Opposition voice by agreeing to the expulsion of legislators who supported the Jharkhand issue from the Assembly. Mr Yadav not only humiliated the legislators but also unconstitutionally took away the freedom of speech of those who raised the Jharkhand demand.

Mr Hansda also said that a group of more than 20 Congress (I) legislators were already in Delhi to present a memorandum to the President, the Prime Minister and the Home Minister in favor of the Jharkhand demand. He said they would also apprise them of the undemocratic attitude of the Bihar Government and might also seek its dismissal in case the State continued its resistance to the demand.

Mr Hansda also said that with the Congress (I) joining the issue, the movement was likely to gain momentum which might force the Center to declare unilaterally the region an autonomous one. Mr Hansda said that autonomy might even mean grant of the Union Territory status or statehood to the region.

Mr Hansda also accused Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav of neglecting the drought-affected areas of tribal Bihar.

According to another report a clash between the Center and the Bihar Government is likely on the vexed Jharkhand issue which is apparent from the mood of the Center not to help the State Government in case the Jharkhandis chose to go in for a bandh and an indefinite economic blockade in the region in protest against the Laloo Yadav Government's refusal to enact the Jharkhand Development Council Bill in the current session of the State Assembly.

The hardening stand of the Home Ministry is reportedly a sequel to the Chief Minister's threat during earlier discussions that he hardly cared for the Center's assistance.

Jharkhandis Threaten 'Another Kashmir' If Demands Not Met

93AS1109C Calcutta *THE STATESMAN* in English
8 Aug 93 p 16

[Text] Jamshedpur, Aug 7. In a significant move the Jharkhand Party (Noren Hansda group) has resolved to observe August 15 as "black day" and hoist black flags in the Jharkhand region in protest against the Center's refusal to create a separate tribal State comprising 26 districts from Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh.

Stating that a resolution in this regard was adopted at the party's central committee meeting held at Jhargram in West Bengal recently, Mr Shailen Maity, general secretary of the tribal group, told *THE STATESMAN* here that his organization had not only decided to boycott all Independence Day functions this year, but also organize dharnas and demonstrations at all the district headquarters in the region.

Interestingly, a similar move was adopted by the tribal group last year, but it failed to evoke much response. On the contrary, the authorities in Chhotanagpur and Santhal Parganas in Bihar came down heavily on the organization for such "nefarious" activities. The East Singhbhum district administration here lodged a case under Section 153(B) IPC [Indian Penal Code] against numerous party workers and arrested several youths on charges of "anti-national" activities.

Substantiating his party's stand on the issue, Mr Maity alleged that though the tribals in the region have been agitating for a separate geographical, political, economic and cultural identity for the past six decades, the Center as well as the State Governments in connivance with a section of Jharkhandi leaders were deliberately delaying a solution to the Jharkhand problem only to suit their interests. "Since the Government has so far ignored the rights of the people, we were left with no alternative but to ignore the Government and the Constitution."

Mr Maity further stated that if the Government continued to neglect their demand for a separate Jharkhand State as per provisions in Article 3A of the Constitution, the region would soon turn into another Punjab or Kashmir. Reiterating his party's demand, the tribal leader pointed out that the Jharkhand Party (Hansda) was not prepared to accept anything short of a separate State comprising 26 districts from four States as the proposed Jharkhand autonomous territory would fail to fulfill the aspirations of the people in the region.

In a related development the All-Party Jharkhand State Struggle Committee has called for a "Jharkhand bandh" on September 15 and an indefinite "economic blockade" of this tribal region from the next day with a view to pressing the Bihar Government to table the amended Jharkhand Council Bill during the current session of the State Assembly.

Giving this information to *THE STATESMAN* here, Mr Sudhir Mahato, MLA and secretary of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Soren) Central Committee, said a delegation of the all-party committee would meet the Chief Minister in this connection and urge him to force the Bihar Government to act in this direction soon.

The committee has set August 27 as the deadline for tabling the amended bill, while the Chief Minister has said that he will convene a special session of the Assembly in September to table the proposed bill.

BJP Said To Back Hindu Religious Leaders Invited by Congress

93AS1093D Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
19 Jul 93 p 4

[Article: "Advani Backs Shankaracharyas' Plan"]

[Text] New Delhi, July 18: In a move aimed at taking the sting out of the recent criticism by four shankaracharyas that "political interests" were dominating the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] president, Mr L. K. Advani, has fully endorsed their proposal to set up a new body of sants to oversee temple construction.

Mr Advani's support for the proposal of an apolitical body of sants put forward by the seers during their conclave at Sringeri appears to be a volte-face on the part of the Sangh Parivar. Till recently, senior RSS [Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh] and VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] leaders had asserted that the VHP-sponsored Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas was the only competent body to build the temple.

In fact, VHP leaders Giriraj Kishore and Ashok Singhal have suggested that the handling of the Ram Janmabhoomi issue should be left to the Nyas. Mr Singhal had, in a letter to the shankaracharyas, struck an aggressive note, asking them to identify the political interests in the Ayodhya movement. The VHP leader had wanted to know whether Chandraswami's *som yagna* could be considered an example of political intervention.

Coming close on the heels of Sangh Parivar leaders, virtually labelling the shankaracharyas as Congress agents, Mr Advani's communication to the Kanchi shankaracharya, Jayendra Saraswati, is seen as politically significant.

The BJP president has suggested that the shankaracharyas should take a lead in forming a body of eminent sants. His only rider is that sants like Nitya Gopal Das and Swami Vamdev of the Nyas should be associated in the proposed panel.

The BJP chief has welcomed the shankaracharyas' initiative as they have endorsed the party's demand for a temple at the very spot where the disputed shrine stood. "*Mandir wahi banega* (the temple will be built at the same spot)" has been the desire of an overwhelming number of people who constitute Hindu society, Mr Advani said.

BJP sources described the developments as a deft move to placate the shankaracharyas and to win them over from the side of the government. But the party would also hope that the shankaracharyas will tone down their criticism of the Sangh Parivar's involvement in the Ayodhya movement.

It is being pointed out that it would be better to disarm the shankaracharyas rather than to join issue with them. Squabbling between the VHP and the seers would present an ugly picture, damaging the Sangh Parivar's claim that it has the support of all important *dharmacharyas* (religious leaders) over the temple issue.

While it remains to be seen whether the VHP will buy the new line, it appears unlikely that the BJP president would have made this significant move without the approval of RSS and VHP leaders.

By intervening in the matter, Mr Advani also appears to have the objective of quashing all talk of asking the shankaracharyas to lead an agitation for the "liberation" of Mathura and Varanasi shrines. The VHP had broken the consensus among senior Parivar leaders that the time was not yet ripe to raise the two issues.

While the senior RSS leader, Mr H. V. Seshadri, had said the Nyas would be prepared to include the shankaracharyas in a steering committee, Mr Advani has gone a step further by asking the seers to constitute such a body. By putting the onus on the shankaracharyas, the leader has sought to defuse any sort of confrontation between them and the VHP.

BJP, VHP Reportedly Reach Secret Accord

93AS1107A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
28 Jun 93 p 1

[Article by Sharad Gupta: "BJP, VHP Reach Secret Deal"]

[Text] The Times of India News Service, Hardwar, June 27. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] and the saints affiliated to the VHP [Vishwa Hindu Parishad] are understood to have reached a secret understanding whereby they will counter every move of the government to ban the mixing of religion with politics.

According to reliable VHP sources the BJP will henceforth try to distance itself from the parishad, ostensibly conforming to the government's stand of separating religion from politics.

However, the saints connected with the VHP have decided to openly support the BJP. A prominent sant of the Ram Janmabhoomi Trust, Swami Vamdeo, stated that the saints would "actively campaign for Ram *bhakta* candidates". And it was no secret that in the option of the saints, of all politicians only BJP candidates were Ram *bhaktas*.

The VHP leaders say that the proposed ban on the use of religion in politics applied only to political parties, while religious bodies were free to extend their support to anyone they liked. The religions organisations will thus be unaffected even if the government brought a legislation in this regard, they contend.

The VHP has already started practising it. The main resolution adopted at the two-day meeting of Central Margdarshak Mandal and Ram Janmabhoomi trust which concluded here last evening, to start a fierce agitation if the government failed to hand over the disputed Ayodhya land to the trust before Dussehra on October 24, is just a pointer in this direction.

The timing chosen by the VHP to start the agitation for Ram temple in Ayodhya could not have suited better to its political ally—the BJP—as elections to four states presently under presidential rule, are likely to be held in November.

Even if the government postpones the elections by making a constitutional amendment, the VHP will reschedule its agitation likewise. Meanwhile, the BJP will concentrate on other political issues like corruption at high places, Jammu and Kashmir problem, Dunkel's proposals and invasion of multinational companies in the Indian market, the sources said.

The VHP leaders yesterday provided a crash course to the saints on issues like infiltration of Bangladeshi refugees in India, Swadeshi movement, Islamic terrorism, economic policy of the country and Dunkel's proposals. The speakers included the former BJP president, Mr. Murli Manohar Joshi and the president of the Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) Mr. Dattopant Thengadi.

About 200 prominent saints from all over the country heard the speakers attentively occasionally raising queries if they failed to understand the complexities of political issues. Later, Swami Vamdeo directed the *dharma charyas* (religious leaders) to launch a mass awareness campaign in their respective states to make the people conscious of "their rights".

The campaign is apparently aimed at generating public support for these issues which incidentally were also on the political agenda of the BJP. The BJP would thus, be able to encash the public support in form of votes during the November elections, according to political observers.

Significantly, the resolutions adopted at the meeting last evening had nothing to do with religion. The resolutions demanded abolition of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, resettling Hindus in the Kashmir valley, repatriation of Bangladeshi infiltrators and outright rejection of Dunkel's proposals.

BJP's Joshi Meets Reporters in Calcutta

93AS1122A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
20 Jul 93 p 7

[Article: "BJP Renews Plea for N-Bomb"]

[Text] Calcutta, July 19. The BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] leader, Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, yesterday reiterated his party's demand that India manufacture nuclear bombs as a deterrent measure since the U.S. was trying to blackmail India by preventing the Russian Federation from transferring cryogenic engine and related technology to India.

The only condition was that India would not be the first to use a nuclear bomb in case of a war, he added.

Since Pakistan in the west and China in the north had attained nuclear capabilities, India must arm itself with nuclear bombs to defend its sovereignty, he added. He requested the Indian government to provide all support to Indian scientists and technologists to carry on with the space and missile programmes.

Dr Joshi told reporters that American pressure on Russia to back out of its contractual obligation with India once again exposed the dangers of a unipolar world where one superpower had the last say on any international matter. If international agreement could be changed by such arm-twisting, there would be no longer any sanctity of bilateral and multilateral agreements.

He felt if Russia could back out of its agreement to supply cryogenic engines and related technologies. India could as well say that it would pay its outstanding dues to Russia in the current international rupee-rouble rate, in which case India would be saving several thousand crores of rupees.

Dr Joshi pointed out that in the early sixties, the U.S. had stopped supplying spares to India taking advantage of India's dependence on the U.S. for foodgrain supply. But at that time, Indian farmers took up the challenge and make India self-sufficient in food.

He was confident this time also, Indian scientists and technologists would take up this more difficult challenge and successfully develop space and missile technology to keep India's head high in the international arena.

The BJP leader regretted, however, that the present Indian government, led by Mr P. V. Narasimha Rao, was so very "weak, corrupt and dependent on foreign loan" that it would not be able to generate enough confidence among the scientific community to take up the present challenge. "When the Prime Minister is under suspicion of taking illegal money, one cannot expect the government to take any hard decisions," he said.

Referring to the government's decision to allow the Amnesty International to visit India, Dr Joshi wondered why such agencies should be allowed to come to India. Only a weak government like the one now at the Centre, would succumb to such pressures.

He demanded the Amnesty International should not in any event be allowed to visit Kashmir. They should, instead, visit Bangladesh and find out what was happening there.

"We have our own human rights commission, which is competent enough to take steps against any human rights violation. We do not need the Amnesty International to find out such violations in our country," Dr Joshi said.

Dr Joshi said instead of tackling the important issues plaguing the country, the government was now busy bringing in legislation to create difficulties for the BJP. He said the proposed bill to separate religion from politics would be a direct onslaught on Hindu culture and an attempt to destroy the national ethos.

Asked what was his prescription to resolve the crisis facing the country, Dr Joshi said first and foremost, the earlier the present "incompetent and corrupt" government at the Centre was removed, the better. He was confident the time was not far away when the Congress, like the Soviet Union, would wither away.

Muslim BJP Leaders Interviewed on Party's Image

93ASI070E Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English (Supplement) 18 Jul 93 pp 8-10

[STATESMAN interviews Muslim BJP Leaders Muzaffar Khan, Rahat Hossain, Arif Baig and Sikander Bakht by Gautam Chaudhuri and Abid Shah; place and date not given]

[Text]

Muzaffar Khan

As a Muslim leader, Muzaffar Khan, 37, is considered the brightest prospect of the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] in West Bengal, given his political standing in the State and trade union experience. Khan was with the Congress for 18 long years, during which he occupied several key party posts: the West Bengal Youth Congress(I) General Secretary, former Councillor in the Calcutta Corporation, Convenor of the All-India Muslim Youth Forum of the Congress(I), and the Vice President of the West Bengal PCC(I) [Pradesh Congress Committee] Minority Cell. He joined the State BJP unit in 1990 and contested the last parliamentary election unsuccessfully on a BJP ticket from the Diamond Harbour constituency. Currently, he is a member of the State BJP Working Committee, in charge of the labour cell. Khan spoke to THE STATESMAN's Gautam Chaudhuri on why he's in the BJP and how he intends to carve his political career.

THE STATESMAN: Why did you sever relations with the Congress(I) and switch to the BJP?

Muzaffar Khan: I was totally disillusioned by the trend of events, when Congress(I) leaders started hobnobbing with the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] while party workers were running for shelter during the CPI(M) rule of terror in West Bengal. The BJP was the alternative choice, and I believe the party enjoys more credibility than the Congress(I).

THE STATESMAN: As a Muslim, how do you identify yourself with the pronouncedly pro-Hindu image of the BJP?

Muzaffar Khan: India also happens to be known as Hindustan and Hindutva is only a synonym for Indian culture. If we can have believers in foreign concepts like Marxism-Leninism, is it any crime to talk of Indian culture and heritage? Nowhere in the BJP Constitution—which I studied very thoroughly before joining the party—is there any word against minorities. How is it that there was no outbreak of communal violence in any of the four BJP-ruled States even though Uttar Pradesh in particular is known to be riot-prone?

THE STATESMAN: Isn't a Muslim BJP leader a paradox? Aren't you sneered at by fellow Muslims for propounding the cause of a Hindu party?

Muzaffar Khan: I have already explained why I do not consider the BJP a party of religious bigotry. It is a viable political party. Yes, I am jeered now and then. But then even Maulana Abul Kalam Azad was ridiculed when he refused to leave the Congress(I) and join the Muslim League. See—the Muslim League has been wiped out not only in India but in Pakistan as well. The future will prove that I am right.

THE STATESMAN: After the Babri Masjid demolition, do you think that Muslims will have any faith in your party?

Muzaffar Khan: The prime responsibility for the snowballing of the Babri Masjid issue into a controversy lies with the Centre. The problem lies deeper. Aren't we Muslims a part of the national mainstream? A sinister

force is trying to keep Muslims economically crippled and prevent the spread of education among us. We in the BJP are determined to foil these forces. Muslims are being used as mere vote-banks by other political parties—and I am totally opposed to this.

THE STATESMAN: How do you visualize a solution to the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid issue?

Muzaffar Khan: Let it be a decision which is acceptable to all.

Rahat Hossain

Rahat Hossain, 60, is one of the earliest entrants to the State unit of the BJP. A resident of Ekbalpore in Calcutta and a small-time leather-goods businessman, he joined the party when it was formed in 1980 and has remained loyal to the State unit ever since. At present, as the chairman of the minority cell of the BJP's State unit, Hossain has been entrusted with the task of setting up a strong minority base for the party in West Bengal. He was interviewed by **THE STATESMAN's** Gautam Chaudhuri.

THE STATESMAN: Being a Muslim, why are you in the BJP?

Rahat Hossain: I consider it to be a secular, democratic party.

THE STATESMAN: Even after the Babri Masjid demolition?

Rahat Hossain: The demolition was an accident and the BJP had nothing to do with it. Because it was never the BJP's plan to demolish the mosque at all. It was an act by a frenzied mob and it would be wrong to link the BJP with it.

THE STATESMAN: But many BJP leaders like Uma Bharati were present during the demolition?

Rahat Hossain: They were indeed there during the demolition, but the situation was out of their hands. I hold the Centre entirely responsible for the act. Why has not the Congress(I) ever tried to find a solution to this issue for all these years?

THE STATESMAN: What is your solution, as a devout Muslim and a BJP leader?

Rahat Hossain: Let it be a peaceful one, through wide-ranging discussions, taking the judiciary into consultation. Let us be guided by facts and not by emotions.

THE STATESMAN: As a Muslim, how do you feel about the occasional anti-Muslim tirades launched by BJP leaders?

Rahat Hossain: BJP leaders never do so.

THE STATESMAN: Are you sure of that?

Rahat Hossain: I am confident because I am convinced that my party stands for secular and democratic traditions.

THE STATESMAN: Do you want a uniform civil code for the people of India, a demand made by your party?

Rahat Hossain: It is necessary, but without hurting the religious sentiments of the people. And when I talk of

religion, I mean all religions. It's a delicate issue, which needs careful handling, because emotions are involved.

THE STATESMAN: Do you think it would be possible to bring about Muslims to support the BJP in Left-ruled West Bengal?

Rahat Hossain: We are going in for a membership drive within a week or so throughout the State. I will be in a position to give a firm opinion in this regard after the drive is over, but I am confident of success. There are a lot of misconceptions about our party which need to be dispelled. Muslims are being misled by others. We will show them the right path. They will all come over to the BJP because truth always prevails.

Arif Baig

Suave and articulate, Arif Baig, president of the minority cell of the BJP, is a politician any party would like to possess. With the BJP making a calculated bid to shed its Hindu chauvinistic image, Baig is likely to play a significant role in future in interpreting the party's message to the Muslim voter. He spoke to **THE STATESMAN's** Abid Shah on the tasks he has at hand.

Since Independence, a handful of emotional issues have been thrown before the Indian Muslims—Urdu, Aligarh Muslim University, Muslim Personal Law and Babri Masjid. There are more serious issues confronting the Indian Muslims—education, for instance.

My party would encourage the study of Arabic language and literature in madrasas, so that Muslims would understand the true meaning of the Quran and not remain dependent on the mullahs for the interpretation of the scriptures. At present, Indian Muslims are being trained to read the Quranic text without their knowing a single word in Arabic. Not surprisingly, they are being cheated in the Gulf countries where the local language is Arabic.

Political capital has been made out of non-issues. If this wasn't so, Babri Masjid would have remained a local issue, to be tackled by the people of Ayodhya. After all, it was Rajiv Gandhi who decided to have the shilanyas as a temple in 1989, just before he went to the polls, to distract people's attention from the Bofors deal.

Muslims in India cannot gain anything out of confrontation. Instead, we need to inculcate in ourselves a spirit of patriotism. We should forget the RSS [Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh] in this regard, and emulate the examples set by Ashfaqullah Khan, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who were Indian Muslims in the true sense of the phrase.

My party is a secular one. Let me narrate an incident that took place soon after Murli Manohar Joshi had become the party president. He had called a meeting of Muslim members of the BJP from all over the country, and about 100 of them turned up at the party's Ashok Road headquarters in New Delhi. They offered namaz right in the party premises. That the BJP has respect for Muslims was thereby well-demonstrated, and where better than at the party's headquarters itself?

Sikander Bakht

Sikander Bakht gets annoyed whenever he is asked why he joined the BJP and continues to be in the party despite being a Muslim. Once close to Indira Gandhi, Bakht has come a long way since the Congress split in 1969. And as the leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, the former Cabinet Minister under the Janata rule evidently has few regrets about the course of his political career. In New Delhi, Bakht enunciated his stand on several key issues to THE STATESMAN's Abid Shah.

—On secularism. I see a definite role for Muslims in the BJP. The Indian ethos became a casualty ever since India opted for a strange brand of secularism. Here secularism starts from despising Hindus, whereas Hinduism embodies our national culture of which secularism is an integral part. The distortion inflicted upon the Indian ethos is a result of borrowing the concept of secularism from outside. Our Constitution lays down that the State will have no religion, but it contains separate provision for religious and linguistic minorities. This only divides the society.

—On the communal card. Muslim leaders have done more harm to Muslims than anyone else. These leaders are mostly politicians with personal ambitions to fulfil. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad could not prevent Partition because of the obsession of Muslims like Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

The Congress(I) has been abusing religion for narrow political gains. The BJP is often charged with spreading communalism, but the party has never used religion as an instrument for cornering votes. The bogey against it is based on deceit. The talk of a legislation against use of religion in politics is directed against the BJP. The present Government has failed to distinguish between Indianness or Hindutva and the use of religion in politics.

—On the demolition. Muslims could not decide whether it was a mosque or not. No prayers had been offered at the Babri Masjid for about 50 years. Islam does not allow worship at a disputed place and none sought an honest religious opinion on this. Once the disputed structure was demolished in the absence of a decision from the courts for decades, a tirade against the BJP was unleashed. Muslims know that mosques have been demolished in Arab countries, for building dams and other places of public utility. yet they are fed a rhetoric that has been impeding their progress in more important fields.

—On Muslim needs. No Muslim leader has ever given a call for a jihad to educate Muslim children. Three Muslim schools run in the capital have a combined result of 29 percent in the board examination, but no leader ever speaks about this. Instead calls are given to defend the Babri Masjid.

Muslims Seen Joining BJP, Gaining Leadership Roles

93AS1070D Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
(Supplement) 18 Jul 93 pp 8-10

[Article by Gautam Chaudhuri: "Selling the Secular Face"]

[Text] Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP], a Hindu revivalist party, whose rise in Indian politics has been phenomenal and which is viewed as the main political force behind the demolition of the Babri Masjid structure in Ayodhya in north India on December 6, 1992.

That could well have been the international lexicon of politics laying down the definition of the BJP. For, in the years since it burst into the Indian political scene, the BJP has all but emerged as a party of the minorities, more specifically, the Muslims.

Riding on a groundswell of popular Hindu suspicion that the Congress(I) of Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi would stop at nothing to woo the Muslim voter, the BJP nailed its colours to the saffron masthead. And it paid off: strength in Parliament jumped from two in 1984 to 86 in 1989 to a commanding 119 in 1991. But then it also dawned on the party leadership that totally alienating Muslims in a country where they make up more than 15 percent of the population could, in the long run, prove to be politically self-defeating. Although since then it has earned widespread opprobrium for its role in the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, the BJP has hardly let up on its campaign to make inroads into the Muslim vote bank.

Nowhere is the party's attempts to rope in Muslim politicians to project a national image more evident than in West Bengal, 29 percent of whose population is Muslim. Twenty-seven Muslims were among the 2,500-odd BJP candidates who won seats in this year's panchayat elections. In the process, they humbled candidates from established political adversaries like the Congress(I) and the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist]-led Leftists to record the first ever poll win for the State BJP unit. Interestingly, the winners include four women.

That may seem a small gain when one takes into account the fact that the party fielded about 950 Muslim candidates in the panchayat polls. But the victories are all the more impressive given the Hindu revivalist line the party has been toeing. Indeed, accusations of the party being communal and anti-Muslim have come not just from Muslims, but from a wide cross-section of political rivals.

The State BJP leaders are happy because the emphatic win of the Muslim candidates on party tickets has enabled the party to acquire new political dimensions. Says the State BJP unit president Tapan Sikdar: "The number may be insignificant but the importance lies elsewhere. Our victorious Muslim candidates have been able to prove that the BJP is a secular, democratic party, which aims at serving people cutting across caste of religious barriers."

By all indications, the panchayat victories will be used as a launching pad by the party to strengthen its still extremely weak minority base in West Bengal. Several clues give this indication in clear terms.

Like the reorganization of the Minority Cell of the State BJP unit, with Rahat Hossain, who has been with the State unit since its inception in 1980, put in charge of the difficult task. The party is also going in for a membership drive, with the accent on wooing minorities to the party

fold. Given the sizeable Muslim population in West Bengal, such restructuring is no longer a luxury but a political necessity.

Currently, out of about ten lakh party members in this State, only about 6,000 belong to the minority community. "We will double the number in this membership drive," says a confident Hossain. Whether Hossain succeeds or not in his unenviable task, making the party's support more broad-based is something the BJP badly needs to pull off if it has to contend with the well-entrenched Leftists, especially the CPI(M). "The task is difficult but not insurmountable—it needs dedicated workers," says Muzaffar Khan, a rising star on the West Bengal BJP's horizon.

Political traditions in West Bengal, however, militate against a BJP sweep of minority votes, which is shared by the Leftists and the Congress(I), both in the industrial and agrarian sectors. The Leftists, though, have an upper hand in this regard, on the strength of tireless campaigns carried out by veteran Marxist leaders in the '40s and the '50s. Although the atheistic stand of the Marxist cadres comes in the way of winning mass Muslim support, the Marxist philosophy of an egalitarian society caught the imagination of the minority community in those days. One can still hear older Muslims talk with deep reverence about Leftist leaders like Muzaffar Ahmed, Mohammed Ismail and Abdulla Rasool, all of whom were known to be great motivators.

The Congress(I), on the other hand, has had a strong minority base since the pre-Partition days. And this has not eroded even now despite the current anarchy within the party's State unit. With the polarization of minorities thus set, the BJP would indeed find it difficult to make a significant dent in the minority base. Its task is all the more difficult because it is yet to produce a leader in the mould of, say, Mohammed Ismail, who can command respect from the minorities and lure them away to the BJP from rival camps.

Taking its cue from the strategy followed by the national leadership, the State BJP unit first started looking towards the minorities in 1989-90, albeit not in a very planned manner. To achieve its end, the unit deliberately played a game designed to throw Muslims into confusion.

The infiltration issue was used to create a divide between the Indian Muslim and the Muslim sneaking into the country from across the Bangladesh border. The party tried to convince Indian Muslims that unchecked infiltration could only add to their woes and spark off an identity crisis. The campaign was accompanied by the publication of a book titled "The Great Betrayal," which sought to explain in detail how the Marxists worked against the country's interest before and after Independence. It was translated into 14 languages and circulated widely in a bid to win over people from the CPI(M)'s fold.

Neither of these tactics, however, hit paydirt in Left-ruled West Bengal, much to the dismay of the BJP leaders. The Ram Mandir issue raised by the party first in 1989 subsequently turned out to be a big deterrent to the induction of minorities into the party. And the Babri Masjid demolition on December 6 last made the situation

worse, when Muslims who had come over to the BJP distanced themselves from the party, many of them out of disenchantment, others under social pressure.

The experience of Nazrul, a 14-year-old youth and a diehard follower of BJP, is a case in point. A resident of Balurghat in West Bengal's Dinajpur district, he was socially ostracized and thrown out of home by his parents after the December demolition when he refused to sever his links with the BJP. Local party leaders bundled him out of Balurghat to Calcutta, where he sought shelter in the party headquarters. He is still in the party office in the city, running errands and doing odd jobs.

Incidentally, the riots in Calcutta that followed the demolition were used by the party to try to stop the erosion of Muslim support. In an unprecedented burst of activity, the party leaders toured far and wide in the districts to proclaim that the CPI(M) was responsible for the riots. In essence, though, it was a bid to sweep under the carpet the embarrassing issue of the masjid's demolition. Subsequently, the West Bengal Government's decision to prevent the BJP from holding public meetings and rallies was also deftly exploited by the BJP to paint itself in martyr's colours.

That they have succeeded to some extent is proved by among other things, the outcome of the panchayat elections, where the BJP managed to win seats despite stiff opposition from the CPI(M) and Congress(I). More important, the victory of several Muslim party candidates has given the State unit a much needed morale booster. Besides, the victories give the party more chance to increase its influence among the minorities, with help from the cadre-based RSS if needed, however queer the idea may seem.

Stress is being laid on wooing the minorities in the industrial sector, which is clear from the nomination of Muzaffar Khan as in-charge of the labour cell of the State BJP. Ironically enough, the minority support has become all the more essential for the party because of the political stranglehold of the CPI(M) and the Congress(I) on the Hindu vote. Although the percentage of votes received by the party's State unit in the parliamentary polls jumped from 1.71 percent in 1989 to 11 percent in 1991, it needs much more—at least 25 percent of the votes—to make itself a major player in West Bengal politics and become an established third force. And with the party's Hindu votes expected to reach a saturation point soon—as has happened in Murshidabad—the minority support is essential for the future of the party.

With the State BJP unit gearing up for raiding the Muslim pocket boroughs of the CPI(M) and the Congress(I), it would be interesting to keep track of the fortunes of the four Muslim women who have won on BJP tickets in the panchayat polls. For Saira Bibi of Indus, Bankura, Marjina Bibi of Johiritala, Malda, and Nazim Bibi of Jaipur, Purulia, the coming days will be a testing time. As women and as BJP candidates, they will perhaps be the odd women out in the politically polarized rural Bengal: both factors would possibly act as hurdles in these women's political careers. Whether they end up like Nazrul or as winners, however, is what the BJP is really waiting to see.

RSS Plan To Enroll Christians, Muslims

93AS1132A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
28 Jul 93 p 16

[Article by Ramesh Gune]

[Text] Los Angeles, Jul 27—A top-ranking leader of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS], says that in the future the Sangh will open its doors to Muslims and Christians in its bid to effect national mainstreaming.

"We will have to do that, we will have to bring them into our fold," said Mr Dattopant Thengadi, 72-year-old founder of the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, and a RSS pracharak for at least 50 years.

Mr Thengadi is currently on a visit to the United States to commemorate the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's famous Chicago address, giving a series of lectures on the Vedantic conception of the socio-economic model for the 21st century.

In a July 26 conversation with this correspondent, Mr Thengadi said that the RSS would initiate a meaningful dialogue with Indian Muslims and Christians, emphasizing that they were an integral part of the social organism and that they should join the mainstream of the national renaissance.

"Subsequently," he said, "both Christians and Muslims will have to realize that they belong to India, their past has been associated with the Hindu past and that they should join the larger efforts of shaping India's future."

"Once this is understood," Mr Thengadi continued, "then Muslims and Christians will automatically come to the RSS shakhas, become one with us."

Mr Thengadi acknowledged that like its manifold activities in various areas of Indian social life, the RSS will also address the Muslim issue. "We will assign some of our pracharaks to work with Muslims and Christians," he said without elaborating. But he added that RSS needs more workers to dedicate for "the cause of the nation."

Soon after his release from Poona jail in 1977, the Sangh Chief, Mr Balasaheb Deoras, had declared in an interview with this correspondent, that the RSS would welcome Muslims to join its activities. In the initial euphoria during the Janata Party regime the RSS and Muslim leaders did make some attempts to come closer. The bid, however, never came to a fruition.

When Mr Thengadi was reminded of Deoras' desire for Hindu-Muslim harmony, he said: "Even Gururji Golwalkar wanted the Muslims to come to the RSS. Hindus have thousands of Gods, and can also have Allah and Jesus. The question is can it be just one-way love?...Can it be only 50 percent love?"

Mr Thengadi, however, conceded that in the larger context, the two communities will have to live in amity and that the RSS will play a role in that regard.

In Los Angeles, Mr Thengadi met with the top Jewish leadership of the city.

Inquiry Commission on Ayodhya Presents Report

93AS1123A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
19 Jul 93 pp 1, 13

[Article by Sharad Gupta: "Report Indicts U.P., Centre"]

[Text]

Tribunal on Ayodhya

Lucknow, July 18. While the state government was guilty of acts of commission regarding the demolition of the Babri mosque on December 6 last year, the Central government was responsible for its acts of omission, according to the report of the inquiry commission of Citizen's Tribunal on Ayodhya.

The report, closely examining various events prior to and after December 6 incidents, criticises the role of the Central government, state government, Sangh combine, judiciary and media, in compounding the situation to a point of no-return.

The report prepared by the commission members, Mr Kamala Prasad, Mr Kamal A. Mitra Chenoy, Prof Dinesh Mohan, Prof S. C. Shukla, Ms Sagari Chhabra and Ms Kirti Singh, has castigated the Central government for inaction even though it had enough evidence for dismissing the U.P. [Uttar Pradesh] government. "Governments before and after December 6 have been dismissed by this ruling party even for lesser provocation," the report says.

There is evidence to suggest that Central as well as state intelligence agencies besides local police passed on detailed information to the Centre including plans of demolition of the mosque as early as November 26 last year. However, the Union government chose neither to act nor to share the information with the supreme court.

The mosque tragic of acts of omission associated with December 6 events was the failure of democratic institutions to uphold the constitution and the law, the inquiry commission says. During the fortnight preceding December 6, the issue of protecting the mosque was discussed in Parliament, in the Union cabinet, in state assembly, in Allahabad high court, in the Supreme Court and in National Integration Council (NIC), but all these institutions failed to live up to expectations.

All political parties, barring the BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party], had in the NIC met on November 23, explicitly authorised the Central government to take whatever steps it considered appropriate to protect the disputed shrine. A resident of Faizabad, Haji Mehboob, personally telephoned the Prime Minister's office to convey the gravity of situation and to request to protect the mosque, at 9.30 a.m. on December 6. But, the Central government preferred not to act not only before December 6, but also till 36 hours after the demolition started.

Although reports regarding an organised assault on the shrine—by the government's own admission—reached Delhi by noon, the cabinet meeting was convened at 6 p.m. when the whole structure had been razed.

The Union government in its white paper on Ayodhya has conceded that it did not send central forces to the disputed shrine before December 8 because it would have had resulted in large-scale bloodshed. But, this was the very reason because of which, Mr Kalyan Singh says, he did not order firing on kar sevaks.

But, the state BJP government, was directly guilty of facilitating demolition as it kept on assuring the Central government, the supreme court as well as the NIC, that the structure would be protected at all costs, the report says. But, its actions prior to December 6 suggest that the demolition had been meticulously planned by members of Sangh combine, of which BJP leaders were also members, adds the report.

There was ample evidence to suggest that the state government would not keep its assurances. The Lucknow bench of the Allahad high court passed an order on July 15 last year, to stop construction of a platform which had been going on from July 9—in violation of court orders not to construct a permanent structure on disputed site.

The NIC met on July 18 and the supreme court too ordered on July 23 that the construction activity be stopped. But, the state government failed to comply with the court orders till July 26. That too after intervention of the Prime Minister into the matter. The commission's report observes: "The will and capacity of the state government in enforcing orders of the highest court was put to test and was found lacking."

The inquiry commission report says that the state government gradually reduced security of the mosque by removing the barricades and other structures.

The kar sevaks in Ayodhya were treated as "state guests," the report says. They were provided food, medicines and transport on government expenses. The state government also ensured that kar sevaks reached Ayodhya in large numbers and no action was taken against them even if they terrorised minority communities in Ayodhya. While central forces like CRPF [Central reserve Police Force], BSF [Border Security Force], CISF [Central Industrial Security Force] and Rapid Action Force (RAF) were deliberately kept out of action, the security of the temple town including the shrine was entrusted to local police and PAC.

The state government also planted pliable and suitable officers at key positions who could follow its instructions blind-folded whereas strict officers were shunted to insignificant positions.

The report has also claimed that the Ayodhya problem, which was a local land dispute prior to 1949 had been allowed to be snowball into a national problem through inordinate delay caused by lengthy judicial procedures.

The report also lays some blame for allowing demolition on the media which played down the perceptible signs of the impending tragedy.

Kashmir: Hindus Demand Separate Homeland With States

93AS1057A Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
14 Jul 93 p 6

[Article: "Plea To Stop Genocide in Kashmir"]

[Text] New Delhi—Panun Kashmir, demanding a separate homeland with Union Territory status in the Valley for Kashmiri Hindus, on Tuesday warned it was being left with no option but to "approach the international conscience to stop this genocide of Kashmiri Hindus by Islamic fundamentalists and the Government of India."

In a strongly worded statement here, Panun Kashmir convenor Agnishekher said "the genocide of Kashmiri Hindus was started by Islamic fundamentalists in the Valley and is being completed by the Government of India itself." He claimed scores of Hindu refugees in the camps in Delhi and Jammu died of heatstroke this summer because "no special measures were taken by the Government to prevent such deaths." He claimed "the highly publicised nodal cell established by the Home Ministry is a non-functional."

The convenor of Panun Kashmir accused the Government of "clearly following a strategy of somehow establishing symbolic peace and symbolic secularism in the Kashmir Valley" and of being "convinced to pay any price for accomplishing such an objective."

Bengal Congress Divided Over Support for Mamata Banerjee

Supports Bengal Line

93AS1069A Calcutta *THE TELEGRAPH* in English
23 Jul 93 p 1

[Text] Calcutta, July 23: The massive mobilization during Wednesday's "siege of Writers' Buildings" has made the state Youth Congress(I) president, Ms Mamata Banerjee, the rallying point of all sections of party workers who want her to lead a militant and united movement against the Marxists.

The PCC(I) [Pradesh Congress Committee], which has so far failed to see eye-to-eye with her on many issues, has almost been forced to stand by Ms Banerjee's side and offer its tacit support to her demand for imposition of President's rule in the state. The PCC(I)'s changed attitude and the AICC(I) [All India Congress Committee] general secretary, Mr Ahmed Patel's admission that Ms Banerjee's plan of action did not go against the party's national line have virtually vindicated her "Bengal line." Mr Mitra has observed that the CPI(M) [Communist Party of India-Marxist] has created a situation which almost warrants imposition of President's rule.

An immediate fallout of "the siege of Writers' Buildings" is the PCC(I)'s decision to rally behind Ms Banerjee in her renewed bid to challenge the CPI(M)'s political authority. The PCC(I), which had clearly distanced itself from Ms Banerjee and tried to corner her in the organization by replacing some district Congress(I) presidents as well as chief of the state Mahila Congress(I), apparently was left with no other option in the wake of Wednesday's massive mobilization.

This explains why the PCC(I) chief, Mr Somen Mitra, general secretary, Mr Pradip Bhattacharya, and vice-president, Mr Subrata Mukherjee, who did not take part in the siege, lost no time to call a Bengla bandh after the police firing.

The PCC(I)'s doublespeak on its stand regarding the Marxists was also effectively exposed by the chief minister, Mr Jyoti Basu's chance observation at yesterday's press briefing that the PCC(I) did not endorse the siege and criticized the leaders for their failure to prevent it. The state administration obviously did not expect the massive mobilization in view of the PCC(I)'s non-cooperation.

The PCC(I)'s decision to stand by Ms Banerjee's side at the hour of crisis has obviously been prompted by a change in the high command's attitude towards her program and line of thinking. Ms Banerjee received the Prime Minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao's tacit approval to her "Bengal line" during her last visit to Delhi.

Ms Banerjee and other state Youth Congress(I) leaders are fully aware of the high command's move to utilize their anti-CPI(M) stir to create pressure on the Marxists to give up their plan to bring a no-confidence motion against the Rao government during the monsoon session of Parliament. Ms Banerjee, however, has made it absolutely clear to everybody that she would not give up the "Bengal line" under any circumstances.

Cannot Support Bengal Line

93AS1069B Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English
23 Jul 93 p 1

[Text] New Delhi, July 23: The Congress(I) high command is of the opinion that the tragic incident in Calcutta on Wednesday that led to the death of 12 persons in police firing could have been avoided had the firebrand state Youth Congress(I) president, Ms Mamata Banerjee, shown greater restraint.

The shift in the AICC's [All India Congress Committee] stand, also conveyed to the WBPC(I) [West Bengal Party Central Committee], is clear in the statement made by Mr Somen Mitra. The president of the state party unit said he was not in favor of promulgating President's rule in West Bengal under Article 356.

The Prime Minister, Mr P.V. Narasimha Rao, and the West Bengal chief minister, Mr Jyoti Basu, discussed the "Writers' siege" at an hour-long dinner meeting at 7, Race Course Road tonight.

Mr Basu described the incident and said, "In my long political career, I have never witnessed any agitation where there is an attempt to storm the state headquarters." Mr Rao had initially asked, "What can I do?" But later, he assured Mr Basu that the party high command was looking into the incident. This shows the Congress(I) is willing to ask Ms Banerjee to be more restrained in the future.

On his return to Banga Bhavan, the state guest house, Mr Basu said he had discussed both the issue of the state Governor as well as the national political scenario with the Prime Minister.

Mr Basu said he asked Mr Rao to appoint a full-time Governor of West Bengal and not someone who has to look after another state as well. The Left Front government is reported to have suggested three names for the post.

Mr Basu said the Opposition-sponsored no-confidence motion was also discussed. When asked to elaborate, he simply said, "I hope the Prime Minister knows our position on the issue."

Lack of Maturity

The shift in the AICC's stand regarding Ms Banerjee became obvious today with senior Cabinet ministers saying she should have shown greater political maturity. They feel she could have scored against the Left Front simply through a massive rally and there was no need to plan a Writers' "siege."

"What will our role be if Opposition parties try to storm North Block?" they asked. The ministers pointed out that no government could sit back and allow the Opposition to storm its headquarters.

Pawar Camp Believed Behind Harshad Mehta Allegations

93AS1056A New Delhi ORGANISER in English
18 Jul 93 p 5

[Article by Jay Dubashi: "Congress Is Finished Like the Ayodhya Structure"]

[Text] Some people make good weather-cocks. They know when it is going to rain and when the sun will come out, and should take their umbrella or not. Congressmen make excellent weather-cocks, which is why you find people like Vishwanath Pratap Singh and Chandra Shekhar jumping from party to party in search of fresh feathers. But Sharad Pawar beats them hollow. No one can gauge the political weather as well as he can, which is why you find him jumping like a cat on a hot tin roof, one day in Delhi, another in Bombay and the third all the way in a God-forsaken place called Karla where he is holed up with Bal Thackeray for days munching the cud.

What ails the great Maratha? Why is he acting so jumpy? His men are going round saying that the Congress is finished and their ship has to look for other ports. Pawar has been jumping right from December 1992, that is, for the last six months. His cosy world was shattered by Ayodhya and no matter how hard he has tried to put it together, it just will not stand up, like that derelict building in Ayodhya itself.

Sharad Pawar was never much of a Congressman which is why lifetime Congressmen like Narasimha Rao do not trust him. After the incident of November 4, 1991, Rao trusts nobody, but that is another matter, but when it comes to Sharad Pawar, Congressmen suddenly begin to see ghosts and clam up. This may be one reason why Pawar was not made a member of the core group which is supposed to look into the party's strategy for the next poll, for Pawar would be more interested in bailing himself out rather than his party, assuming he has one.

Men like Pawar do not see much of a future for themselves in the Congress, when the party itself seems to be facing a bleak future. Most opinion polls point that way. The latest by a Kerala magazine gives Congress 190 seats, which would make it the second largest party in the Parliament, after BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party]. BJP would bag 214

seats, a hundred more than it has now, and almost 30 more than the Congress. The leftists of all hues, from pale pink to dark red, will wind up with 120 seats, but the number would include Telugu Desam also, as well as AIDMK [All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam], which would make the front a dubious proposition.

The Congress can, of course, try and form a government with leftists who are notorious carpetbaggers and would not mind taking a crack at the centre, a back-door entry so to speak. With men like Arjun Singh at the helm, this cannot be ruled out, but it is doubtful whether Arjun Singh will be there at all. His party is going to be wiped out—according to the poll—in most northern States and quite a few western ones too, and it is most likely that he, along with his nearest rival, will hit the dust in the next poll.

This is where Sharad Pawar's weather-cock comes into action. After Ayodhya, Pawar knows that his goose is cooked, or at least plucked. According to the opinion survey, Pawar's party will get no more than 15 seats out of 52 seats in Maharashtra, Goa, Daman and Diu. This will be more than what Arjun Singh will get in Madhya Pradesh, maybe about 10 or so, but a man with 15 seats out of 190 can hardly cut much of a figure in Delhi when the defeated clan gathers for the postmortem. Pawar knows he is a goner, but he will be a goner not only in Delhi but also in Maharashtra. If his party manages to get just about a dozen seats in that State, there will be such a big pressure for mid-term poll in the State that Pawar will have to give in. And he will lose his chief minister's crown too.

Men like Pawar are in politics for the crowns they yield, not for the game. Since he will be a zero in Delhi after the next poll, he is trying hard to ensure that he is not reduced to double zero by losing his crown in Bombay too. Hence his meetings with Bal Thackeray and the long sessions in Karla, which, incidentally is well known for its caves. If Pawar can keep the Shiv Sena on his side, or rather he can keep on Shiv Sena's side, he may still get something out of the disaster he faces.

Narasimha Rao and Arjun Singh know this. It will not be the first time Pawar will have betrayed his party. Rao's men are almost convinced that it is not BJP which is behind Harshad Mehta but someone else and that someone else could well be someone close to Sharad Pawar. After all, if reports in Marathi press are to be believed, Nusli Wadia has been having meetings with Jethmalani and Mehta in his office, though Jethmalani is not and has never been Wadia's lawyer, and one can take it for granted that Sharad Pawar knows much more about the suitcase affair than either the CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] or JPC [Joint Parliamentary Committee], enough to nail Narasimha Rao when the occasion should arise.

But Pawar is not going to be the only one to jump fences in the near future. There will be several others in the game, Congressmen as well as non-congressmen. The Congress is expected to wind up with just about four seats in UP [Uttar Pradesh], which means that there will be no future for ND Tiwari, who will have to look for greener pastures elsewhere. Tiwari is an ex-PSP [Praja Socialist Party] man—

for a PSP man, he has gone very far indeed—and he will have no difficulty in acquiring new friends.

On the other side of the fence will be Biju Patnaik whose party—assuming the man can be said to have a party—will lose heavily in the poll. What will he do then? He will dump his own outfit and get together with the Congress. So will many Laloos in Bihar who too will be wiped out. The Congress is expected to do much better in Bihar, Orissa and Kerala, getting 60 seats in these three states, nearly a third of their total tally in the country.

And what about our great friend Jyoti Basu? He may not be wiped out but his castle will start crumbling. The Marxists will be wiped out in Kerala—they might be lucky to get five seats there—and will be cut down to size in West Bengal. BJP is slated to increase its all-Indian percentage of votes from 20 to 30 percent in the next poll. Every third Indian will be a BJP voter. In West Bengal, the proportion may be less—about 10 to 15 percent—but remember, or rather Jyoti Basu should remember, that less than 10 years ago, only one out of 14 voters had voted BJP. How times change!

Sharad Pawar, Arjun Singh Said To Agree on Secret Pact

93AS1070F Bombay THE ILLUSTRATED WEEKLY OF INDIA in English 30 Jul 93 pp 14-15

[Text] On July 14, Sharad Pawar, who came to Delhi for a conference on octroi, attracted unusual attention. First, it was observed he did not have any exclusive meeting with the prime minister. Secondly, he met a large number of MPs who called on him. These two lent importance to his assertion that there was nothing to reports to a Pawar-Arjun pact. He denied that there was any such pact, under which when Rao stepped down, Arjun Singh would take over as PM [prime minister] and Pawar as party president.

The Pawar-Arjun pact has been assumed to exist since the two met privately during the crisis after the Harshad Mehta allegation. Whether it exists or not, Congressmen believe that there is an understanding on power-sharing between the two in the post-Rao scenario. As a Pawar loyalist said: "He has to deny it. Can he admit it, even if there is an agreement?"

Another interpretation is that Pawar's denial is intended to convey an altogether different signal to the pro-changers: he does not want loyalties to crystallise around two personalities; because then those who do not belong to either camp might feel alienated and line up behind Rao during a trial of strength. The idea is to carry as many MPs [members of Parliament] in the pro-changers camp, without exposing those who favour change as being supporters of Pawar or Arjun Singh.

They say the need for this is because the Congress is facing a peculiar dilemma—changing the leader—which the party has never had. So nobody really knows how to go about it and be sure of succeeding Congress leaders, however, outline several scenarios, any one of which might come about depending on the exigencies at the time. It could be

one or a combination of the scenarios outlined since no one is certain whether or how they will succeed in getting Rao to resign.

Scenario 1: The Opposition makes it impossible for Parliament to proceed with any business. NF-LF [National Front-Left Front] leaders stonewall the government into submission and silence, insisting that they will allow conduct of business only if Rao quits. The core group then rescues the party by proposing that Rao himself favours another leader till he can clear his name.

Scenario 2: More damaging revelations, particularly implicating Rao and his sons, would raise the stridency of public and media criticism about Rao. This coupled with the inability of the ministers to function in Parliament would force Rao to quit.

The expectation here is that there will be more revelations coming from former Karnataka Chief Minister S. Bangarappa, former CBI [Central Bureau of Investigation] Joint Director K. Madhavan, Harshad Mehta and the former chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, P.K. Gupta.

(There have been threats that Bangapappa may spill the beans on Goldstar and the involvement of Rao's son in business deals in Bangalore unless he replaces Chief Minister Veerappa Moliy and drops Margaret Alva as a minister.)

Scenario 3: To initiate meetings of MPs in groups of 10 to 12, where it is openly stated that Rao's resignation will save the party. That the party cannot suffer because of an individual; that while the party will defend Rao, it will be strengthened to do this job if he volunteers to resign till his name is cleared of the allegations. The PM gets wind of these views gaining ground and being openly canvassed and takes the most dignified way out.

Scenario 4: A group of MPs, 25 to 30, speaks up on the eve-of-session meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party [CPP] meeting. "Last time when the crisis exploded openly, Ramachandra Rath from Orissa spoke up. Nobody denied a word of what he said. If one man can, why can't others stand up?" said one pro-changer strategist. Even if a feeble voice demands the PM's resignation at the CPP meeting, a chorus will rise and Rao cannot say no, is the calculation of this strategist.

Scenario 5: This is a sequel to Scenario 3. If Rao does not respond as he is expected to, then a group of heavyweight leaders, including members of the core group, the CWC [Congress Working Committee] and CPP, will meet Rao and ask him to resign so that the party survives in government. They will, with the backing of the NF-LF, convey that the objection is not to the Congress continuing in office, but Rao remaining at the head of it. Of course, these heavyweights will assure Rao that he can come back as PM after his name has been cleared and that the Congress will back him in his fight to erase the "malicious slander."

Rao Addresses Economic Planning Conference*93AS1102A Madras THE HINDU in English
30 Jun 93 p 1*

[Quotation marks as published]

[Text] Calcutta, June 29—Defending his Government's new economic policies, the Prime Minister, Mr. Narasimha Rao said today that in the early years of planning, there was greater need for the public sector's involvement in the development process to build infrastructure and the core sector. Now the private sector was expected to have a larger role in industrial production while the Government addressed itself to eradication of poverty, illiteracy, etc., he said.

Inaugurating the Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis birth centenary celebrations and the conference on 'Planning and Economic Policy in India' at the Indian Statistical Institute here, Mr. Rao admitted that the 'Mahalanobis model' for the development of the core sector and attaining self-sufficiency was 'as relevant today as in the early years of planning'.

"Even to-day our country has to strive hard to achieve rates of investment higher than the current rate of 26 percent or so. The rates of investment of some of our fast-growing neighbours to the east are at least 50 percent higher than ours," he said.

In the earlier stages of development, only the public sector could mobilise resources of the magnitude required for rapid growth as private initiative was weak or absent. But to-day market forces were active only when conditions like better distribution of income and assets and competition were ensured by the State.

Mr. Rao said that the role of the State "must necessarily be adapted to the needs of the times. In the last two years, the Government had taken a major initiative in bringing about a re-ordering of the roles to be played by the public and private sectors.

He said: "We have introduced new industrial, trade and fiscal policies to provide incentives to the private sector." The policies were aimed at eliminating the deficit and converting it to a surplus to generate resources for development while curbing inflation.

Private sector criticised: Interestingly, the West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr. Jyoti Basu, an ardent critic of the Centre's new economic policies, spoke on the private sector's lukewarm interest in investing in the development of core or infrastructural sectors and said the 'Mahalanobis model' had sought to promote both self-reliance and social direction in the development process.

Central policies had failed to check inequalities in the ownership and distribution of productive assets. According to a National Sample Survey (NSS), the top 10 percent of rural households still were owned by 71 percent of landholdings. Similar concentration in the ownership of industrial capital was noticeable. As a result, only the top crust were the beneficiaries of public sector activities, Mr. Basu said.

Such inequities were the major bottlenecks for overall expansion of the economy while selective income increases of upper income groups led to distortions, 'including a rise in import bill often tilted in favour of luxury consumption goods or capital goods necessary to provide luxury goods to satisfy the upper income groups'.

Mr. Rao said resources availability was a vital issue for the development effort. Demands on the limited resources available to the State continued to increase and it was not easy to find a solution that could accommodate all interests while sustaining the growth momentum.

On the issue of cutting subsidies, Mr. Rao said to correct some imbalance in consumption of different types of fertilizers some concessions had been allowed. Expenditure on public distribution system (PDS) would continue for the benefit of the poor.

On the need for greater compliance and better tax collection machinery, Mr. Rao referred to the long-term policy of low and uniform tax rates and said: 'We shall apply the same principles of moderation and non-discrimination more broadly in the coming years'.

Mr. Rao said the doctrinaire approach to developmental problems had been replaced by 'pragmatic, workable solutions'. 'We have, over the last two years, attempted to apply such pragmatism to our own basic problems which remain to-day as they were in the early days when Prof. Mahalanobis grappled with them.

Among those who addressed the gathering were Union Minister for Commerce, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, Union Minister of State for Planning, Mr. Giridhar Gomango, Union Minister of State for Communications, Mr. Sukh Ram, and Prof. M.G.K. Menon, president, ISI [Indian Standards Institute]. Mr. P.N. Haksar, Chairman, ISI in his welcome address, spoke on the contribution made by Prof. Mahalanobis to the science of statistics and development planning. Prof. B.L.S. Rao, Director, ISI proposed a vote of thanks.

Mr. Rao unveiled a bust of Prof. Mahalanobis and later inaugurated an achieve and exhibition on Prof. Mahalanobis' life and work at Amrapali. He had arrived here by a special aircraft to inaugurate the Mahalanobis birth centenary at 9.30 a.m. and returned after completing his engagement at the ISI.

PTI reports:

4 IPF [Indian People's Front] workers held: Police arrested four Indian People's Front activists as they waved black handkerchiefs to Mr. Rao, when he was returning to the airport from the ISI.

Police said that the four workers, who were in the crowd to see the Prime Minister's convoy passing through the five-point crossing at Shyambazar area, suddenly waved black handkerchiefs. Police immediately took them into custody.

Singh's Economic Reforms Seen in Disfavor in Congress(I)

93AS1056F Calcutta SUNDAY in English
24 Jul 93 pp 25-27, 29-30

[Article by Aditi Phadnis: "Why Is Everyone Gunning for Manmohan Singh?"]

[Text]

The economy may be ready for take-off but the finance minister is fighting for his own survival.

If there was any justice in the world, he would be Prime Minister. He has all the requisite qualifications. In a country sick of politics and politicians, he is a technocrat who cares little for power. At a time when almost every senior minister fears corruption revelations, he is the one man whose honesty has never been in doubt. And as the world comes one step closer to writing India off as a slumbering irrelevance, it is Manmohan Singh's personal credibility that makes international financial institutions continue to have faith in the country's desire for change.

But no, Manmohan Singh is not one of the people short listed for the job by the Congress leadership. Among the contenders are real estate operators, lottery agents and wheeler dealers. Few have any record of administrative efficiency. Fewer still are regarded as men of vision. But the way Indian politics works, were Narasimha Rao to bow out tomorrow, one of these men would take over. And he would probably sack Manmohan Singh.

What is it about India that ensures that the one minister in this government who has performed creditably, whose reputation is spotless, an whose legacy will benefit future generations is today the target of a sustained attack?

Two weeks ago, the draft report of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) investigating the scam was leaked to the press. The report was devastating in its indictment of the finance minister. He was held responsible for the ills of a system that he had done his best to reform.

When some JPC members attempted to redress the balance, the committee split along party lines with chairman Ram Niwas Mirdha's position being difficult to discern. The hawks pressed for stronger criticisms of Manmohan Singh in the final report, due to be presented to Parliament during the monsoon session. And some MPs [members of Parliament] speculated that the indictment could be harsh enough to force the finance minister—always the most honorable of men—to resign on moral grounds.

And yet, even as the vultures circled over North Block, the economic portents were better than anyone had dared hope a year ago. Economists estimated that in the absence of severe external shocks—a major oil price hike, a devastating war, etc.—the Indian economy was set to grow at seven percent per annum over the next two years. Industrial production would fare even better. Some estimates predicted an industrial growth rate of 15 percent per annum.

The finance ministry has already demonstrated that it can cut inflation to reasonable levels. Between January to June, the wholesale price index rose by only 1.5 percent.

Meteorologists reckon that India is due for a good monsoon this year. If they are right then the rate of inflation may actually decline over the last six months of the year.

There were other encouraging portents too. Manmohan Singh had projected a budget deficit of Rs[rupees]4,300 crore this year. Now there are signs that the deficit could be much lower. The reason is that the ongoing revival of Indian industry is certain to increase tax revenues way beyond the original budget estimates.

But these are just figures. More significant, are the other measures of the finance minister's success. For the first time, the world believes that India is serious about globalising its economy. For the first two years of the government's life, foreign companies hesitated to invest in India for two reasons. Firstly, there was an industrial recession in the West which left funds unavailable for investment. And secondly, the world doubted whether India would stick to the liberalised policies given the U-turns exhibited by our governments in the past.

Now, there are signs that foreign investment may finally start trickling in. Despite Ayodhya, despite the riots and despite the Bombay blasts, India has demonstrated that its commitment to liberalisation is non-negotiable.

The only problem is, whether the finance minister who has made all this possible, will be able to continue in office. Especially now that he has been accused of sleeping on the job by the JPC.

The JPC's argument is that Manmohan Singh, as finance minister, was expected to keep track of the financial goings-on in the country. And while it was creditable that he didn't lose his sleep if the stock market rose one day and fell the next, he should have had an inkling of the scam before it broke so messily. And he should have taken steps to prevent its repercussions affecting the entire Indian economy.

This, however, ignores the fact that on every possible occasion, Manmohan Singh warned India about a share market which was going through the roof. And as commerce minister, even P. Chidambaram warned brokers in Bombay that the trends in the stock market were not prima facie, healthy. But could either of the ministers have intervened to short-circuit what were basically the labour pains of liberalisation?

The logical answer to that question is no. But the ritual blood-letting that accompanied the news of the scam meant that heads had to roll. The first to go was P. Chidambaram. And now the survival of the finance minister, too, seems to be in some doubt.

But Manmohan Singh's response to the situation is difficult to predict. When SUNDAY asked him whether he had offered to resign like his colleague Chidambaram, he merely smiled and said, "Why should I? I have done my duty." And yet, he is the sort of man, his friends say, who is quite capable of chucking up his job in disgust.

And his disillusionment with the system is apparent. "India doesn't respect talent or a sense of service," he says reflectively. "Most of my colleagues are people who could have earned 20 times as much abroad as they're doing

here. If they continue to work in India, it is out of a sense of duty to give back to the country, what it has invested in us."

Nobody disputes that Manmohan Singh has repaid his debt to India in good measure. "You have to give the devil his due—and whatever differences you might have with him, Manmohan Singh is no devil," says a former minister. "There are many things he has already done, and if he gets up to leave at this time, we will be in the difficult situation of stagnant liberalisation. That will cost India thousands of crores of rupees more than what has been lost in the scam."

But what are the items on the liberalisation agenda that Manmohan Singh is yet to turn his attention to?

—A revamp of the financial institutions. This includes both banks and agencies financing development, such as the Industrial Development Bank of India (IDBI), the Industrial Finance Corporation of India (IFCI), etc. The Narasimhan Committee has already given its report, but its recommendations have been implemented only partially.

—The entry of the private sector into the insurance business. The government has liberalised this sector in principle, but is yet to put this liberalisation in motion. As a result, a whole lot of private sector companies, including American companies, are waiting to be let in. Unless guidelines are laid down, this sector cannot attract competition. And unless it is competitive, Singh's policies won't work.

—Several changes have to be introduced in taxation. The Raja Chelliah Committee has submitted its report, but there are several areas where radical measures are necessary, like taxes on foreign investment in India. Clause 20 in the Finance Bill (1993) provided some tax reliefs which would favour long-term investors.

China and India started out more or less on a par in this respect and yet it is China which attracts far larger volumes of foreign investment (it has even had its own scam) rather than India. This is partly because of a tax structure that favours investors. China and Indonesia have taxation levels which, despite other regulatory devices in their system, are more investor-friendly than India's.

—Parity has to be brought about in agriculture and industrial production. This means putting an end to the eternal debate about internal colonialism in India.

This is a subject which has found political endorsement—the Congress(I) meeting at Tirupati mentioned this as one of the subjects on which the party should be clear about its stand. However, this has received no attention either at the political or the economic level.

Is India's pricing policy for agriculture and industrial goods fair? Agriculture has always been in the private sector, to the extent that the state has resorted to market intervention only to bail out agriculturists in a situation of crisis. But industry has been in both private and state hands. Is the treatment given by the State to the two non-discriminatory?

—While the finance minister has done substantial work on opening up trade—and rising exports are a testimony to this—more liberalisation is required. Changes are needed in the Foreign Investment Act. The rupee has, contrary to the view of pessimists, remained stable. But an assurance is needed that it will stay that way.

In the last year, the rupee has appreciated 15 percent vis-a-vis the pound sterling, and nine percent vis-a-vis the Deutschmark. It has depreciated only three percent vis-a-vis the dollar. And while this is a heartening trend, the sensitivity of the exchange rate mechanism requires constant reassurance that the trend—and the policy that led to it—will endure.

—The biggest challenge remaining for Manmohan Singh is the management of public sector undertakings (PSUs). These are behemoths which have been feeding off the economy for more than 40 years now. Some have been successful, others haven't. But it is the Indian taxpayer who has always picked up the tab. When Singh became finance minister, he made it clear that the equation had to change.

Then came the question of opening up the public sector enterprises to the general public. PSU shares were to be hocked—but how? PSUs were huge organisations with a salary bill that far exceeded their revenue earning capacity. Would the general public subsidise PSU inefficiency?

It was clear that it wouldn't. When Indian Railways tried to raise Rs 1,200 crore by bonds floated through the Mutual Funds, it could raise only Rs 10 crore. Rs 1,190 crore short of its target.

But there is the other side of the coin—namely that the government just doesn't have the money anymore to subsidise the public sector. "If we go on doing that, the budgetary deficit will increase. The only way to bridge that is to cut allocations to the states—and they're already crying because that is one instrument you've already used," says a planning commission member.

In divesting its shares in the public sector, the government is clear that it cannot dispose of capital assets to meet revenue expenditure. And yet, it cannot continue to fund inefficient PSUs either. In the central sector alone, PSUs represent an investment of more than Rs 1,00,000 crore. Taken together, the central PSUs, state PSUs, and cooperative-managed PSUs represent an investment to the order of Rs 2,30,000 crores. This is an astounding sum. And tellingly, it was the profits of the public sector which went on to finance the scam.

So divestment of the PSUs is a matter fraught with difficulties. And this is one subject the finance minister hasn't really been able to address.

So, plagued by the doubts and the recklessness of his colleagues, and weighed down by the responsibilities he still has to carry out, Manmohan Singh is close to the brink. It needs little to push this finance minister off the edge. And while he may be cheerful about his current predicament ("never a dull moment," he smiled and told his colleagues) Manmohan Singh will have no compunctions about giving up office should he be accused of mala fide intentions.

So, what happens if he does quit?

First, there is no guarantee that India's structural reforms programme will continue. This is a message that foreign investors are getting loud and clear. So as attacks on the minister mount, there is increasing scepticism about the enduring power of India's reforms programme.

Next, it will need a superhuman effort to persuade the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that India is committed to liberalisation. Already murmurs that India is looking for quick-fix solutions can be heard at world economic forums.

In pure economic terms, the World Bank's help and internal stability are two cornerstones of structural readjustment. Moving Manmohan Singh would be a definite sign of internal instability. And there are no prizes for guessing what happens if a cornerstone is removed.

But equally, it has to be understood, that given the "indictment" of Manmohan Singh in the present draft report, a honourable man is left with no option but to resign. The nearest parallel is B. Shankaranand, whose conduct the JPC draft report finds "unbecoming of a minister." And if Shankaranand resigns there is no way that Manmohan Singh can stay on as a minister.

And while Yashwant Sinha and Ram Niwas Mirdha (who is reported to have been the author of the paragraph pertaining to Manmohan Singh in the draft report) might succeed in securing Manmohan Singh's scalp, it is India which will have lost at the end to it.

Team Player

Manmohan Singh Is Not Very Popular With His Own Partymen

The Congress(I) both respects and fears Manmohan Singh, and for the same reason: the finance minister's fabled incorruptibility. Nonetheless, a sizeable section of the party believes that Manmohan Singh was responsible for the scam. And that, with the criticism levelled by the JPC, he is only getting his just desserts.

The reasons for this view are both ideological and practical. The dismantling of controls and the end of the licence-quota-permit Raj has hit one set of people the hardest: the middlemen and liaison persons who form the backbone of the Congress(I). Not surprisingly, they have nothing but contempt and an abiding hatred for the man who ushered in the new system: the high priest of liberalisation, Manmohan Singh.

Their unhappiness makes sense when you compare the North Block of today with what it was when Pranab Mukherjee, or even N. D. Tiwari, were in charge and socialism reigned supreme. Industrialists queued up for appointments and lesser Congressmen lobbied for favours.

But Singh simply refuses to entertain anyone. So much so that even people who have the interests of liberalisation at heart have great difficulties getting through to him.

It is not security considerations or bureaucratic regulations that make Manmohan Singh inaccessible. Indeed, his house on V. Krishna Menon Marg has minimal security

and visitors are treated with a refreshing lack of formality. Singh is a remote figure because he chooses to stay that way; an attitude not appreciated by most of his partymen.

In fact, the Congress(I) has never been too happy with him ever since he derided the best brains in the Congress by rubbishing their manifesto. Then came the fertiliser subsidy episode, which made Congressmen realise just how much of a menace the man could be. But much as they raved and ranted, they could do no damage to Singh, who was backed by Prime Minister Narasimha Rao.

But after Harshad Mehta's little performance, the Prime Minister himself is in a vulnerable position. And Manmohan Singh has become the easiest of targets.

Politicians React to Foreign Bank Closure Proposal

93AS1118E Madras *INDIAN EXPRESS* in English
21 Jul 93 p 6

[Text] New Delhi—The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) on Tuesday discussed a proposal for recommending withdrawal of permission to four scam-tainted foreign banks to operate in India as punishment for violating the banking laws and indulging in unlawful practices.

During the discussion on chapter eight of the draft report dealing with the role of the foreign banks in the scam, the members were divided on the amendment moved by Yashwant Sinha (SJP [Samajwadi Janata Party]) suggesting that CitiBank, Bank of America, Standard Chartered Bank and ANZ Grindlays wind up their business in India for five years. While members belonging to the National Front-Left Front [NF-LF] parties strongly supported this amendment, some Congress and BJP [Bharatiya Janata Party] members opposed such a stringent measure observing that this might go against the country's overall economic interest. Among those who opposed the proposal were Mani Shankar Aiyer and Murli Deora (both Congress) and Jaswant Singh (BJP). Jagesh Desai (Congress) favored any harsh step against the foreign banks stopping short of their closure. There was a proposal by the NF-LF members that the Government confiscate the profits of these foreign banks. Some of them demanded that Niranjan Shah, who has been extradited from UAE [United Arab Emirates], be summoned by the JPC.

While the JPC received replies from the Prime Minister's Office, the Prime Minister's personal aide R. K. Khandekar and several other agencies and individuals, Harshad Mehta's brother, Ashwin and his Delhi representative, Mohan Khandelwal sought more time for furnishing replies to the interrogators from the JPC. The deadline for sending replies expired on Tuesday.

During the discussion on chapter 5 dealing with the private and cooperative banks, Ram Naik (BJP) moved an amendment calling for steps to protect the depositors in the liquidated Bank of Karad and Metropolitan Cooperative Bank, Bombay. He suggested that the deposits of these two banks be merged with some other banks in the interest of the depositors. Naik also proposed that the depositors' insurance be enhanced from Rs[rupees]30,000 to Rs 2 lakh

by revising the Depositors' Insurance Act. George Fernandes (JD [Janata Dal]) and Deora supported these proposals.

Murasoli Maran (DMK [Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam]) made a reference to P. Chidambaram's resignation from the Union council of ministers and suggested that the practice of allotting shares from the promoter's quota be abolished. It may be recalled that taking a principled stand Chidambaram quit office for having purchased such shares.

Significantly, the reply of Bombay Stock Exchange [BSE] director M.R. Mayya to the JPC confirmed Harshad Mehta's contention that he had been favored by the BSE following his payoff to the Prime Minister. Referring to the BSE meeting of January 21, 1992, Mayya in his reply said: "The committee was satisfied that no action may be taken against these brokers." The 'brokers' mentioned by Mayya were clearly Harshad's representatives.

Finance Minister Manmohan Singh in his reply denied that he had ever modified any proposal put forward by the CBDT [Central Board of Direct Tax] for his approval. The JPC is meeting again on July 27.

Export Target for 1993-94 Up by 20 Percent

93AS1104A Bombay *THE TIMES OF INDIA* in English
30 Jun 93 p 19

[Text] New Delhi, June 29 (PTI)—The Centre has fixed an export target of \$22.13 billion (nearly Rs[rupees]71,000 crores) for 1993-94, about 20 percent more than during 1992-93, and promised full support to exporters to achieve it.

In 1992-93, exports amounted to \$18.42 billion and the target of \$22.13 billion in the current year "is considered to be achievable in the background of the emerging trends in export growth in the recent months," the commerce ministry said in a release.

Textiles, including handicrafts and carpets, top the export list with a target of \$7.4 billion in the current year, against \$5.24 billion in 1992-93.

About \$3.45 billion worth of gems and jewellery are to be exported this year compared to \$3.05 billion in 1992-93.

The ministry release said the target has been fixed in consultation with export promotion councils [EPC] and commodity boards. The councils and boards had expressed confidence in their ability to achieve the targets, the release said.

The government "has promised full support both at policy and administrative levels to enable view the eighth plan overall export target of \$33.6 billion in 1996-97 reflecting a rate of growth of 13.6 percent per annum.

The release said in the improved environment of new Exim policy, reduction in custom tariffs, particularly for export-related imports, and introduction of full convertibility of rupee on trade account, the government hoped that industry and trade would put in their best efforts to achieve these targets.

| Principal exports | Export performance 1992-93 (provisional) | Target 1993-94 |
|---|--|----------------|
| Total | 18,420 | 22,138 |
| Plantation | 462 | 500 |
| Agriculture and allied products | 1,904 | 2,255 |
| Marine products | 602 | 650 |
| Ores and minerals | 741 | 869 |
| Leather and leather manufactures | 1,275 | 1,490 |
| Gems and jewellery | 3,052 | 3,450 |
| Sports goods | 55 | 37 |
| Chemicals and related project goods | 1,871 | 2,188 |
| Engineering goods, including project goods | 2,246 | 2,500 |
| Electronics | 211 | 375 |
| Textiles, including handicrafts and carpets | 5,243 | 7,400 |
| Raw cotton | 68 | 170 |
| Petroleum products | 476 | 269 |
| Other exports | 234 | — |

The following are the details (export targets 1993-94)—value in million dollars:

Conversion rates 1992-93: 1 US = Rs 28,9626

1993-94: 1 US\$ = Rs 32 (provisional)

1. According to the assessment made by EPCS and commodity boards, exports during 1992-93 are estimated at \$19,944 million of which exports of textiles, handicrafts, etc., constitute \$6590 million.

2. Does not include computer software as these do not pass through customs channels.

Tea Exports to Russia Under Serious Threat

93AS1103A Bangalore *DECCAN HERALD* in English
30 Jun 93 p 13

[Text] Calcutta, June 29 (PTI)—A series of complaints about the quality of Indian tea is threatening to jeopardise Indian tea exports to Russia just when the export prospects are brightening for the first time after the break-up of the Soviet Union.

An Indian trade delegation which included producers and exporters of tea, on its return from a visit to Kazakhstan and the CIS, said today that several complaints were lodged with them by the authorities in Moscow and St. Petersburg about supply of substandard quality of tea in recent times.

The Russians named several Indian exporters who had supplied spurious tea and had also shown the delegation a packet labelled "Bombay Tea" which contained used tea.

Pointing out that this was the first time that the Russians, who accounted for a bulk of Indian tea exports, were complaining about quality, sources said that it was up to the Government to take the sternest possible measures if the market was to be salvaged.

Sources said that the fact that some unscrupulous traders masquerading as exporters were out to negate the entire efforts of the Government, industry and trade to step up exports to Russia, was corroborated by a recent case in the City.

Referring to the case, sources said that a certain exporter had been caught red-handed by the customs trying to ship spurious tea to Kazakhstan.

The tea consignment, valued at Rs[rupees]22 lakh by a panel of brokers and said to contain Assam, Dooars and CTC tea, was later revealed to have contained objects which failed every test under the prevention of the Food Adulteration Act, sources said.

A show-cause notice had been issued to the exporter concerned by the Tea Board and his licence was liable to be cancelled. The tea trade and industry has voiced deep concern at the events, fearing a backlash on Indian exports all over the world if the strictest action was not taken immediately.

The apex body of the India tea industry—the India Tea Association (ITA)—is likely to deliberate on the issue at its general committee meeting to be held tomorrow, ITA sources said.

Tea trade sources said that there would be a long-term impact, from which it may be difficult to emerge if the reputation of Indian tea was put at stake by a handful of dishonest persons.

Expressing concern at the fact that often the brokers panel was being made to give the price certification for a sample of tea while another consignment containing some other sample was being exported, a tea broker said that all brokers should blacklist such a company to prevent such happenings.

Sources said that before the disintegration of the USSR, India exported 104 million kgs to that country. This fell sharply after 1991 with exports amounting to only 50 million kgs in 1992, sending Indian tea exports into a tailspin.

This year exports were projected at 70 million kgs and, according to reports, the offtake was already picking up this year.

New Chief of Army Staff Joshi Interviewed

93AS1101A Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English
1 Jul 93 p 7

[Text] New Delhi, June 30 (PTI)—The new chief of army staff, General Bipin Chandra Joshi, today said combating militancy was a "legitimate task" for the army and suggested returning of the force to fight this menace more effectively.

In an interview, Gen Joshi, who takes over tomorrow as the 17th chief of the army staff, said as counter militancy operations were "politico-military" in nature, they would be more fruitful and effective if a political strategy was outlined and a time-frame set for such operations.

The new army chief has suggested creation of an effective and permanent counter insurgency force, taking elements from army, para-military forces and other organisations with an initial strength of 25 battalions. Such a force, he added, would have the advantage of permanency, knowledge of terrain and a constant flow of intelligence.

He has suggested that such a force should be under the operation control of the army, while being bankrolled by the home ministry or the state governments where they were operating and manned by army officers both at junior and senior level.

The general said with its existing commitments, the army was not equipped to take on this role as units engaged in counter militancy in Kashmir, Punjab and Assam had to be constantly shifted to ensure that their battle integration with other arms of the army did not suffer.

Asked what could be India's answer to Pakistan's continued covert support to militancy in Kashmir and Punjab, Gen Joshi said first it had to be made clear whether the present line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir was a permanent one and whether we still were firm on our right to Pakistan occupied Kashmir.

He said such a clear stand would help the armed forces to act quickly to clear the lines of communications with the border, which was a must as no army could fight a war if its communication and supply lines were not secure.

Gen Joshi insisted that a time-frame for army deployment in all counter terrorism operations had to be set and suggested that with counter operations picking up momentum in Jammu and Kashmir, they should be taken to their logical conclusion by unfolding a political strategy alongside and giving it a time limit of two to five years to fructify.

Asked to comment on observations made by certain senior army commanders that the Indian Army was overstretched and not meant for deployment in internal security operations and internal firefighting, the new army chief said it was the "legitimate task" of the army to counter both external and internal threats, and observations to the contrary by anybody meant sending wrong signals downwards to jawans, who were doing commendable job in anti-militancy.

The new army chief said, today the army, was ready and capable of undertaking any national endeavour providing

the task was spelt out with "clarity and adequate time given for reorientation and if necessary, the army could be restructured to deliver it."

Asked what his thrust areas would be on taking over as the new chief of the army staff, Gen Joshi said the biggest challenge before the army was to maintain desirable excellence, which is affordable financially, adding that his catch word would be "optimum excellence with affordable economy."

He said the Indian Army was at crossroads and had to choose between number and force multipliers. "If you want to go in for a lean army, then you ought to have force multipliers," he said.

Gen Joshi felt that priorities of expenditure in the army were not tailored to the country's needs and, without elaborating, said there was a necessity of going in for "reprioritising."

He said another major challenge before him would be to improve the quality of life in the army, particularly the infantry, which, the general said, had borne the brunt of tension, privation, and emotional cost attendant in delivering results in myriad missions assigned to it in some of the most inhospitable terrains and in trying conditions.

He said in the Indo-Pak milieu India would be well advised to maintain a "decisive edge militarily" and the defence planners had to ensure this in the interest of national security.

The new army chief said with painstaking efforts over the years the Indian Army had now total integration of the armour and infantry and air power. He said another dimension would be added to the force with the induction of mobile surface to surface missiles, "Prithvi."

Gen Joshi said the Indian Army would get another boost with the induction of the 5.56 mm arms. He said priority for distribution of such weapons would depend on availability of the arms, adding that definite preference would be given to troops engaged in low intensity combat and elite units like the para-commandos.

Asked what measures he would undertake to make service in army more attractive, Gen Joshi said the quest for improving the terms and conditions of service were an ongoing exercise. "We have to be realistic and see what the country can afford when approached correctly. The country has never denied legitimate aspirations of the armed forces," he added.

Air Chief Seeks Russian Jet Trainers

93AS1093C Calcutta THE STATESMAN in English
1 Aug 93 p 9

[Article: "Kaul Hopes To Get Jet Trainer"]

[Text] New Delhi, July 31.—The new Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal S. K. Kaul, today said he hoped that the Air Force would get the advanced jet trainer during his tenure, reports UNI.

The Government had "recognized" the need and a final decision on the aircraft was an "advanced stage," he told reporters after assuming office.

Air Chief Marshal Kaul said four former Air Chiefs had communicated to the Government the Air Force's requirements during the last decade, and it was the consensus view that AJT was the "need of the service."

He said his priority despite the resource crunch would be to ensure supply of spares to the Air Force to maintain its operational preparedness, get Ajit and upgrade the MiG-21 BIS series to enhance its life and battle-worthiness.

The Air Force Chief said the supply of spares had become imperative since normal supplies had been "disrupted and diminished" with the disintegration of the erstwhile Soviet Union.

Asked if Russia was behaving differently regarding the supply of spares to the IAF, he replied in the negative. "I have not come across reports that suggest so," he said, adding that he did not visualize any "very serious difficulty" in getting the spares from Russia.

With talks between India and the Russian Republic continuing he was confident of getting "tangible results" soon.

The Air Force Chief, however, admitted that the rate of flow of spares would not be as it was in the past.

To overcome the resource crisis, he said he would continue to limit inventories to the barest minimum for logistic needs. He said the former Chief of Staff had set up a committee to modernize inventories.

Asked about the steps taken to upgrade the MiG-21 BIS series, Air Chief Marshal Kaul said no final decision had been taken. But his concern was to get it done at the earliest so that the IAF got an additional thrust to fight and get better results.

He made it clear that the Air Force would like to derive a maximum return for the investment made in upgradation of this series of MiG fighters. If the process was delayed, the life-span of these aircraft would be reduced, he pointed out.

Replying to another question, the Air Force Chief Marshal said upgrading aircraft was common to aviation world over. The costs of aircraft had increased nearly fourfold during the past decade and it would continue to rise. Therefore no country, including the USA could afford to discard a plane when there was "still life in it."

He said the MiG-21, in possession of Pakistan, were of Chinese origin and 10 years old.

The upgradation of the MiG-21 BIS series would include better navigational facilities, the airborne radar capability attack system and accurate delivery of weapons.

Asked to compare the IAF [Indian Air Force] with the Pakistani Air Force, he admitted that in terms of aircraft, Pakistan had more F-16s, ground attack planes and MiG-21s acquired from China. Pakistan had also modernized its air defence and had "ready supply" arrangements, he added.

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